

the folk, roots and world music magazine

# penguin eggs



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Issue No. 60 Winter 2013 \$5.99



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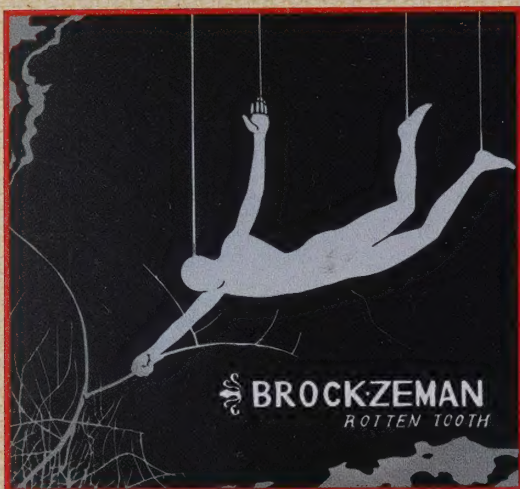




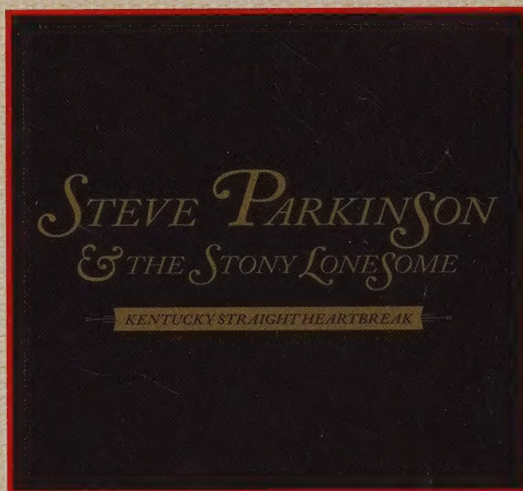
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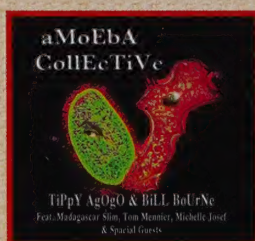
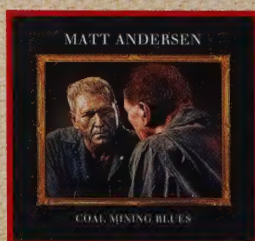
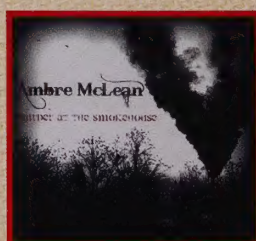
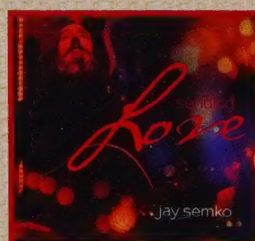
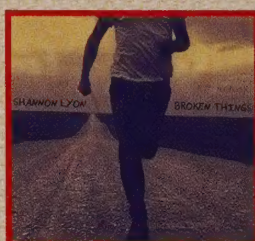
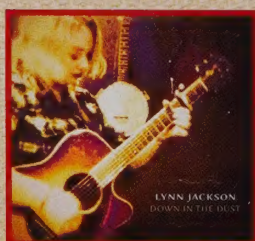
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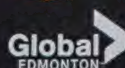
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## penguin eggs

Canada's Folk, Roots and World Music Magazine

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This magazine takes its name from Nic Jones's wonderful album *Penguin Eggs* — a collection of mainly traditional British folk songs revitalized with extraordinary flair and ingenuity. Released in Britain in 1980, it has grown into a source of inspiration for many young, gifted performers.

Nic, sadly, suffered horrific injuries in a car crash in 1982 and has never fully recovered. He now seldom performs. His care and respect shown for the tradition and prudence to recognize the merits of innovation makes *Penguin Eggs* such an outrageously fine recording. This magazine strives to reiterate that spirit. *Nic Jones's Penguin Eggs* is available through Topic Records.

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## editorial

Has interest in world music peaked in Canada? A lack of nominations in our Album of the Year poll might suggest so. With few exceptions, its artists generated little mention. Why? Well, consider this: *Penguin Eggs* receives scant review copies of international world music recordings. Most media outlets in the country fare no better. WOMEX, the key promotional organization for performers from Armenia to Zanzibar, recently made a Top 20 list of world music record labels. From North America, only Nonesuch and Cumbancha made that list. Nonesuch released a mere two records last year that fit this topic: Rokia Traoré's *Beautiful Africa* and Bombino's *Nomad*.

Yet, the problem in Canada runs much deeper than a lack of available recordings. In 2008, after a run of 17 years, CBC Radio cancelled Philly Markowitz's wonderful, national, world music program *Roots And Wings*. Markowitz successfully took world music out of its 'exotic' ghetto and made it accessible for all. Artists like Kiran Ahluwalia, Alpha YaYa Diallo and Madagascar Slim still enjoy successful careers thanks to Markowitz's support. But nothing has replaced *Roots And Wings*. When CBC Radio shuffled the decks and added Radio 2, producers and management were supposed to incorporate world music, blues, jazz, roots, and folk into daily programming. That hasn't happened. And we're now left largely listening to the generic and predictable.

And it shows. Folk festivals aside, recent world music gigs here in Alberta have drawn poorly despite offering such wonderful talent as Angélique Kidjo, Habib Koité, and Oliver Mtukudzi. Yet, I'm assured that artists of this calibre draw better in such cities as Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. For all that, they are playing smaller venues than they would have a decade or so ago. Besides, fewer intentional artists are now touring here, largely due to increased costs—a problem compounded by expensive, more demanding U.S. visas. A tour of Canada with a large ensemble makes no financial sense without added American dates.

So fewer records, marginal airplay, and less touring obviously adds up to diminished exposure. What can be done? I'm not sure but the first step to solving any problem requires recognizing a problem exists. Stay tuned.

— By Roddy Campbell

(With thanks to Derek Andrews, Jonathan Kertzer, Philly Markowitz, and Terry Wickham)



## cover feature

**14** . . . Good For Grapes' debut album, *The Man on the Page*, bristles with captivating hooks, creative flair and raw energy. The most exhilarating band to come out of Vancouver since *Spirit of the West* were an acoustic trio in polka dot shirts, reckons Roddy Campbell.

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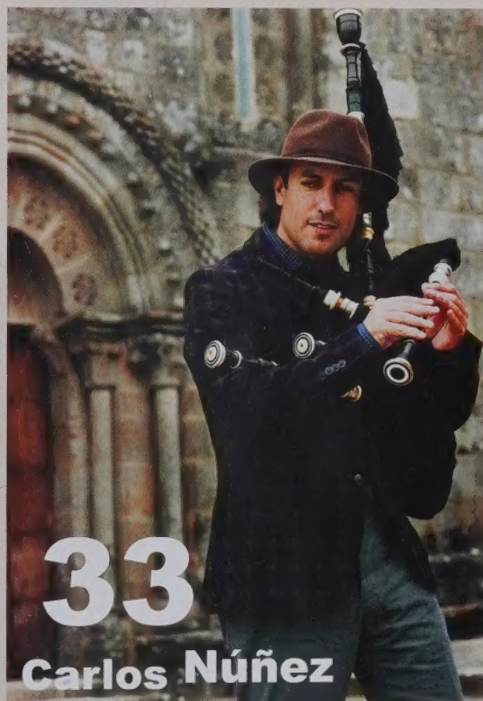
"I got dressed up and took the bus to the Boone house in Beverly Hills after an invitation. The big iron gates opened and there I was, talking with the man himself. We chatted a bit and I was ushered into a room with chairs set up. I expected it was some sort of audition. In fact, it turned out to be an Amway meeting!"  
— Sojourners' Marcus Mosley meets Pat Boone

"I've always been drawn to sad songs. Growing up in Scotland I heard a lot of them. Most people hate bagpipes but I love them. And I love melancholy melodies. My son Teddy says that I even make *Happy Birthday* sound sad."

— Linda Thompson

"Sometimes with the pipes you have to try and be a magician, maybe to make it seem as if there are two melodies at once."

— Carlos Núñez





# sultans of string

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- FEB 4 • CREEKSIDE THEATRE, LAKE COUNTRY BC
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- FEB 7&8 • W/ KAMLOOPS SYMPHONY, KAMLOOPS, BC
- FEB 22 • W/ SUDBURY SYMPHONY, SUDBURY ON



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## chris mckhool's all-time top 10

Leonard Cohen

Songs of Leonard Cohen (Columbia)

Peter Gabriel

Peter Gabriel Plays Live (Geffen)

Kevin Libberté

Sundance (Independent)

Hugh Marsh

Songs for my Mother and Father (Cool Papa)

Joni Mitchell

Blue (Reprise)

Ragleela

Jai Ma (Omkar)

L. Shankar

Pancha Nadai Pallavi (ECM)

Turtle Island String Quartet

Who Do We Think We Are? (Windham Hill)

Willie & Lobo

Live In Concert (Narada)

Neil Young

Rust Never Sleeps (Reprise)

Chris McKhool and The Sultans of String's latest recording is Symphony. Our feature on them runs on page 24.



Chris McKhool

## fred's records top 5

1. **Shanneyganock**  
Rockin' On The Water (Avondale Music)
2. **The Once**  
The Once (Six Shooter)
3. **The Dardanelles**  
Eastern Light (Independent)
4. **The Once**  
Row Upon Row . . . (Borealis)
5. **Amelia Curran**  
Hunter Hunter (Six Shooter)

Based on album sales for August, September and October at the Freds Records, 198 Duckworth Street, St. John's, NL, A1C 1G5



Lhasa

## 10 Years Ago

1. **Various Artists**  
Beautiful: A Tribute to Gordon Lightfoot (Borealis/NorthernBlues)
2. **Emmylou Harris**  
Stumble Into Grace (Nonesuch)
3. **Po' Girl**  
Po' Girl (Festival)
4. **Lhasa**  
The Living Road (Audiogramme)
5. **Lyle Lovett**  
My Baby Don't Tolerate (Lost Highway)
6. **Harry Manx and Kevin Breit**  
Jubileee (NorthernBlues)
7. **Gillian Welch**  
Soul Journey (Stony Plain)
8. **The Be Good Tanyas**  
Chinatown (Network)
9. **Jesse Cook**  
Normal (Narada)
10. **Michael Franti & Spearhead**  
Everyone Deserves Music (BooBoo Wax)

Compiled from all album sales on the Charts page in Penguin Eggs issue No. 20 published in the Winter of 2003.

## wfmfms top 10

1. **Arcade Fire**  
Reflektor (Merge Records)
2. **The Avett Brothers**  
Magpie & The Dandelion (American)
3. **Serena Ryder**  
Harmony (EMI)
4. **Frank Turner & Jon Snodgrass**  
Buddies (Xtra Mile)
5. **Deep Dark Woods**  
Jubileee (Six Shooter)
6. **The Head And The Heart**  
Let's Be Still (Sub Pop)
7. **Frank Turner**  
The Second Three Years (101 Distribution)
8. **Blitzen Trapper**  
VII (Vagrant Records)
9. **Michael Franti & Spearhead**  
All People (Capitol)
10. **The Sadies**  
Internal Sounds (Outside)

Based on album sales for August, September and October at the Winnipeg Folk Music Festival's Music Store, 203-Bannatyne Ave., Winnipeg, MB. R3B 3P2



# highlife top 10

1.	<b>Nicolas Repac</b> Black Box (Naïve)
2.	<b>Bombino</b> Nomad (Nonesuch)
3.	<b>Pokey LaFarge</b> Pokey LaFarge (Third Man)
4.	<b>Bob Dylan</b> Another Self Portrait (1969-1971) (Columbia)
5.	<b>Vieux Farka Toure</b> Mon Pays (Six Degrees)
6.	<b>Kevin Finseth</b> The Wounded Quartet (Highlife)
7.	<b>Charles Bradley</b> Victim of Love (Dunhill/Daptone)
8.	<b>Steve Earle</b> The Low Highway (New West)
9.	<b>Rokia Traore</b> Beautiful Africa (Nonesuch)
10.	<b>Various Artists</b> Orient Noir (Piranha)

Based on album sales for August, September and October at Highlife Records, 1317 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3X5

# permanent records top 10

1.	<b>Sam Baker</b> say grace (Sam Baker Records)
2.	<b>Gurf Morlix</b> Finds The Present Tense (Rootball)
3.	<b>Deer Tick</b> Negativity (Arts & Crafts)
4.	<b>Dale Ladoucer</b> Do Ya Think (Crowtown)
5.	<b>Kat Danser</b> Baptized By Mud (Outside)
6.	<b>The Sadies</b> Internal Sounds (Outside)
7.	<b>Pokey Lafarge</b> Pokey Lafarge (Third Man)
8.	<b>Robbie Fulks</b> Gone Away Backwards (Bloodshot)
9.	<b>Neko Case</b> The Worse Things Get ... (Anti)
10.	<b>The Avett Brothers</b> Magpie & The Dandelion (American)

Based on album sales for August, September and October at Permanent Records, 8126 Gateway Blvd. Edmonton, AB, T6E 4B1



Kat Danser



Pokey LaFarge

# sillions top 10

1.	<b>Bernard Adamus</b> No 2 (Distribution Select)
2.	<b>Lisa Leblanc</b> Lisa Leblanc (Distribution Select)
3.	<b>Mumford &amp; Sons</b> Babel (Glassnote)
4.	<b>Catherine Durand</b> Les murs blanc du Nord (Distribution Select)
5.	<b>Various Artists</b> Douze Hommes Rapailés (Les Editions Ad Litteram Inc)
6.	<b>Richard Desjardins</b> L'existoire (Distribution Select)
7.	<b>Fred Pellerin</b> C'est un monde (Disques Tempête)
8.	<b>The Toure-Raichel Collective</b> The Tel Aviv Session (Cumbancha)
9.	<b>Fred Pellerin</b> Silence (Disques Tempête)
10.	<b>Ballaké Sissoko &amp; Vincent Segal</b> Chamber Music (Six Degrees)

Based on album sales for August, September and October at Sillons, 1149 Avenue Cartier, Quebec, QC, G1R 2S9.

# soundscapes top 10

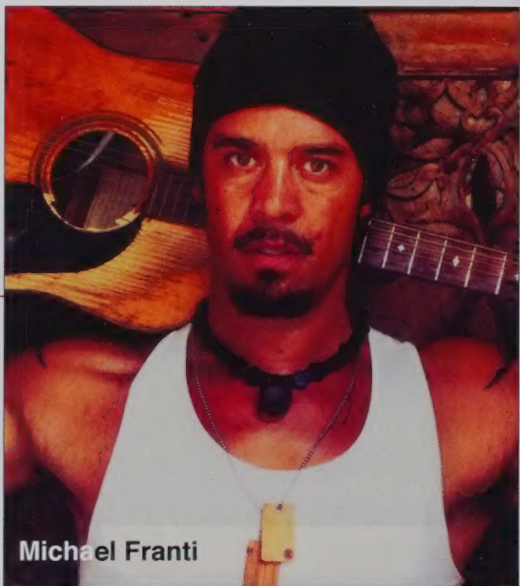
1.	<b>Neko Case</b> The Worse Things Get ... (Anti)
2.	<b>Bob Dylan</b> Another Self Portrait (1969-1971) (Columbia)
3.	<b>Bill Callahan</b> Dream River (Drag City)
4.	<b>Valerie June</b> Pushin' Against A Stone (Concord)
5.	<b>The Sadies</b> Internal Sounds (Outside)
6.	<b>Basia Bulat</b> Tall Tall Shadow (Secret City)
7.	<b>Volcano Choir</b> Repave (Jagjaguwar)
8.	<b>Fiver</b> Lost The Plot (Triple Crown Audio Recordings of Canada)
9.	<b>The Band</b> Live At The Academy Of Music 1971 (Capitol)
10.	<b>Okkervil River</b> The Silver Gymnasium (ATO)

Based on album sales for August, September and October at Soundscapes, 572 College Street, Toronto, On, M6G 1B3

# ckua top 20

1.	<b>Michael Franti &amp; Spearhead</b> All People (Capitol)
2.	<b>Little Miss Higgins &amp; the Winnipeg Five</b> Bison Ranch Recording Sessions (Independent)
3.	<b>Deep Dark Woods</b> Jubilee (Six Shooter)
4.	<b>Rae Spoon</b> My Prairie Home (Saved By Radio)
5.	<b>Neko Case</b> The Worse Things Get ... (Anti)
6.	<b>Lindi Ortega</b> Tin Star (Last Gang)
7.	<b>Trombone Shorty</b> Say that To Say This (Verve)
8.	<b>Sam Baker</b> say grace (Sam Baker Records)
9.	<b>Deer Tick</b> Negativity (Arts & Crafts)
10.	<b>Hugh Laurie</b> Didn't It Rain (CWarner)
11.	<b>Elvis Costello &amp; the Roots</b> Wise Up Ghost (Blue Notes)
12.	<b>Ricky Skaggs/Bruce Hornsby</b> Cluck Ol' Hen (Skaggs Family Records)
13.	<b>Josh Ritter</b> The Beast In Its Tracks (Pytheas/Redeye)
14.	<b>Alela Diane</b> About Farewell (Rusted Blue Records)
15.	<b>The Sadies</b> Internal Sounds (Outside)
16.	<b>Valerie June</b> Pushin' Against A Stone (Concord)
17.	<b>The Civil Wars</b> The Civil Wars (Columbia)
18.	<b>Kat Danser</b> Baptized By Mud (Outside)
19.	<b>John Reischmann</b> Walk Along John (Corvus Records)
20.	<b>Guy Clark</b> My Favorite Picture Of You (Dualtone)

Based on the most-played folk, roots and world music discs on CKUA radio - [www.ckua.org](http://www.ckua.org) - throughout August, September and October.



Michael Franti



# News•Gossip•Rumour•Tattle

The University of Manitoba bestowed an honorary Doctorate of Letters on US, singer-songwriter **Ani DiFranco** at a special convocation, Nov. 22, in Winnipeg. An Honorary Doctor of Letters is conferred upon those who have made a significant contribution to the Arts and Humanities. DiFranco received hers for pioneering independent music and for her impact on folk music, a university press release stated. It recognised her as a feminist cultural icon “for her unflinching critiques – expressed in song – of sexism, heterosexism, racism, and class-based discrimination.”

The same day, DiFranco, 43, also accepted the 2013 Achievement Award from the Winnipeg Folk Music Festival at its annual gala fund raiser. The award is given annually to a performer who has made exceptional contributions to folk music and the community.

DiFranco first performed at Winnipeg in 1992 and has gone on to receive nine Grammy nominations in a career that spans 20 albums. She has recorded with the likes of **Pete Seeger, Prince, Maceo Parker** and **Utah Phillips**.

Past recipients of the festival award include **Sarah Harmer, Leon Redbone, Loreena McKennitt** and **Billy Bragg**.



Veteran English singer-songwriter **Roy Harper**, 72, has been charged with a

series of historic sex offenses against an under-age girl. Harper, who made such acclaimed albums as *Lifemask*, *Valentine* and *HQ*, and inspired the **Led Zeppelin** song *Hats off To Harper*, faces nine sexual offenses charges in total and has been summonsed to appear at Hereford Magistrates’ Court, West Mercia, England.

A police spokesman said: “The summons relates to two counts of unlawful sexual intercourse with a girl under 13, three counts of indecent assault on a girl under 14 and four counts of gross indecency with a girl under 14.

“The charges are in connection with offenses alleged to have taken place in Herefordshire between 1975 and 1977 and relate to one victim.”

Harper, who currently lives in Rossmore, Clonakilty, County Cork, in the Republic of Ireland, has released a catalogue of more than 30 albums that stretch back to 1966.



The Ottawa Folk Festival refunded 5,000 tickets when **Neil Young** canceled his appearance there on opening night, Sept. 4. Young subsequently canceled several other concerts after **Crazy Horse** guitarist **Frank “Poncho” Sampedro** broke his hand.

“It was the biggest headline act to cancel on me in 20 years,” festival artistic director **Mark Monahan** told the Ottawa Citizen. “It was a huge hit for us.”

Young’s slot was filled by **City and Colour**.



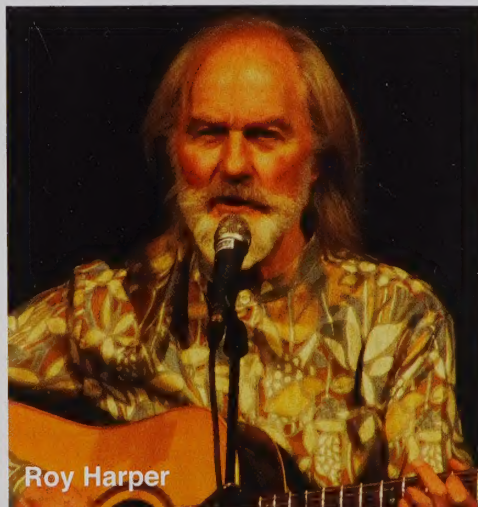
An all-star celebration of inspirational Scottish guitarist **Bert Jansch**’s life will take place at London’s prestigious Royal Festival Hall Dec. 3. It will be filmed by BBC Television and broadcast in early 2014. Jansch died in 2011 and would have been 70 on Nov. 3. Participants at the charity event will include **Eric Clapton, Martin Simpson, Robert Plant, Martin Carthy, Ralph McTell, Donovan**, and Canadian **Bonnie Dobson**. They will perform music played, written and inspired by Bert in tribute to his influence on their own music. All proceeds will go to the Bert Jansch Foundation, which supports academic and musical institutions and their students through workshops and scholarships. The foundation will also create and foster projects and programmes that focus attention on Jansch’s musical legacy.



*Blues Revue* magazine appears to have folded. Owner **Chuck Eagle**, who took over *Dirty Linen* and oversaw its demise, cannot be contacted. In the past year, no *Blues Revue* issue has come out on deadline, often falling six months behind schedule. The last issue published was in May. However, its production staff, minus Eagle, formed MojoWax Media Inc. and are now



Ani DiFranco



Roy Harper



Bert Jansch



publishing *Blues Music Magazine* in both print and digital format. Ruthie Foster is on the cover of the initial issue. A statement from the company said: "We cannot speak to the status of Blues Revue, but we will be sending all current Blues Revue subscribers Blues Music Magazine. All ads' booked will appear according to the schedule."



Stony Plain Records will receive the Blues Foundation's Keeping The Blues Alive Award at a gala dinner Jan. 24 in Memphis, TN. The Edmonton, AB, company ran by *Saturday Night Blues* host **Holger Petersen**, will be recognized under the record label category.

"We're all really proud at Stony Plain to win this international award," says Petersen. "It's an award that reflects on our staff and supporters and especially our artists and their teams. It was great to receive congratulations and encouragement from our blues artists **Ronnie Earl, Maria Muldaur, Duke Robillard** and **Kenny 'Blues Boss' Wayne**."

Stony Plain Records were formed in 1976 and has over 300 releases in its back catalogue including the latest albums by **Eric Bibb, MonkeyJunk** and **Amos Garrett**.

The Blues Foundation oversees The Blues Hall of Fame and hosts the Blues Music Awards.



And talking about Amos Garrett: there have been several benefit concerts across the country – Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Vancouver and Edmonton – to help him deal with his financial losses suffered during the severe floods that ravaged southern Alberta last June. The 71-year-old veteran

blues, jazz and roots guitarists' home near High River was under seven feet of water. He has since returned to his house. The latest benefit concert and silent auction in Edmonton, Nov. 16, raised \$9500.00 and featured the first live performance in 10 years from the **Rockin' Highliners**. Other acts included **Dave Babcock & The Nightkeepers** and **Jimmy and the Sleepers**.



**Mumford & Sons** will cease all band activities for the foreseeable future, said its keyboard player **Ben Lovett** after the band played its final date promoting their latest album, *Babel*, Sept. 23 in Bonner Springs, KS. Lovett told, *Rolling Stone* magazine that the band is ready for a long break from an active year that included several Grammy wins and a health scare for bassist **Ted Dwane**.

"We just know we're going to take a considerable amount of time off and just go back to hanging out and having no commitments or pressure or anything like that," said Lovett. "It feels like the last week of school right now, before school holiday when you're in high school ... I think everyone's excited about being free of schedules."



Universal Music Group has launched a new 'High Fidelity Pure Audio' range of Blu-Ray audio discs. The storage capacity of a Blu-Ray disc means that no compression has to be used to fit it on, as is the case with the current 16-bit Compact Disc. One of the first batch to be released of these high quality recordings is **Nick Drake's** *Five Leaves Left*, released on 21st Oct. 2013. The original LP came out in 1969.

These new discs also come with a download code for mp3 versions of the albums, which seems a bit of a miss as a higher quality lossless download would seem a better fit with the product.

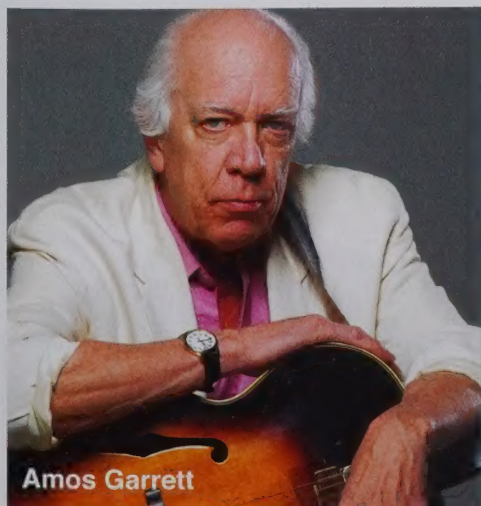


**Oysterband** will release *Diamonds on the Water* – their first studio album of original songs in seven years, Feb. 17, 2014, through Navigator Records. The new record will also mark their first since the departure of their viola player **Ray 'Chopper' Cooper**. And one of its key tracks, *The Wilderness*, was inspired by a hike they took into the Rockies during a trip to the Canmore Folk Music Festival in 2005.

As **John Jones** writes: "The band went for a trek in the Rockies on a day off, up to Stanley Glacier. The Canmore Festival crew was reluctant to let us do it but finally (armed with rattles and pepper sprays in case we met a bear) we went. I watched Ian [Telfer] panting up the scree slope and we sat in this tiny alpine meadow under the overhang of the glacier until a cloud came over, and a cold wind. Sometime then, or over the many pitchers of beer that night, this lyric must have taken shape in Ian's mind."



And another one bites the dust ... Music, the venerable record and hi-fi store located in Sebrinvile, ON, will shortly close its doors for good. Run by the congenial husband and wife team **Neil and Judy Matheson** for the past 40-odd years, the store has been sold and will clear its stock with a discount sale starting Dec. 1. When that's gone, the Matheson's will shut up shop. *Penguin Eggs* used Music's record sales for some of its first best-selling album charts out of Ontario. The Mathe-



Amos Garrett



Mumford & Sons



son's started their business in 1972, and it includes a home entertainment installation company, which they sold Nov. 22. The pair has no immediate plans for the future other than to enjoy themselves.



**Gordon Lightfoot** has planned two Canadian tours for 2014. In the spring, he will perform in St. John's, Corner Brook, Halifax, Antigonish, Moncton, London, Hamilton, Kingston, Summerside, and Owen Sound. His autumn concerts include stops in Victoria, Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Cranbrook, Ottawa and will end at Toronto's Massey Hall. Ticket prices range between \$29.50 and \$99.50.

Lightfoot's Facebook page will offer up-to-date tour details as well as regular contest opportunities that include tickets and a chance to meet the man himself.



John Cohen, a founding member of the influential old-time band the **New Lost City** Ramblers and musicologist, film-maker and photographer, will release *Here and Gone* – a book covering his photographs of **Woody Guthrie**, **Bob Dylan** and the early 1960s New York's folk music scene – through German publisher Steidl in 2014.

Cohen, 81, spent time with Guthrie during the 1950s and early 1960s and made intimate photographs of the music icon. And in 1970, Cohen took photographs of a young Dylan near his home in Greenwich Village and in Putnam Valley around Cohen's farmhouse. Ektachrome slides of these photo sessions were recently unearthed during the selection of unreleased recordings and demos from the period for Dylan's new *Bootleg Series* album. From these, limited edition prints have been made and are now

available for the first time. The deluxe version of Dylan's *Another Self Portrait* includes a book with over 60 of Cohen's photographs from these early shoots.

Cohen's photographs have been on display this past autumn at the Morrison Hotel Gallery, Los Angeles and at L. Parker Stephenson Photographs, in New York City. The Woody Guthrie Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, opened April 27 with an exhibition of Cohen's photographs.



The 17th Annual Maple Blues Awards will take place at a gala in Toronto, Jan. 20, at Koerner Hall at the Royal Conservatory of Music. **Dawn Tyler Watson** and **JW Jones** will host the event. The nominees by category include, Entertainer Of The Year: **The 24th Street Wailers**, **MonkeyJunk**, **Shakura S'Aida**, **Steve Strongman**, **The Harpoonist & The Axe Murderer**; Electric Act Of The Year: **The 24th Street Wailers**, **Bill Durst**, **David Gogo**, **MonkeyJunk**, **Soulstack**; Acoustic Act Of The Year: **Brandon Isaak**, **Dawn Tyler Watson** and **Paul Deslauriers**, **Harrison Kennedy**, **Little Miss Higgins**, **Michael Jerome Browne**; Male Vocalist Of The Year: **Bob Walsh**, **Charlie A'Court**, **Donald Ray Johnson**, **Harrison Kennedy**, **Jim Byrnes**; Female Vocalist Of The Year: **Angel Forrest**, **Dawn Tyler Watson**, **Layla Zoe**, **Shakura S'aida**, **Treasa Levasseur**; Recording Of The Year: **MonkeyJunk**, *Il Frequencies* (Stony Plain); **David Vest**, *East Meets Vest* (Ark-O-Matic); **Julian Fauth**, *Everybody Ought To Treat A Stranger Right* (Electro-Fi); **Angel Forrest**, *Mother Tongue Blues* (Morning Star); **Ben Racine Band**, *One of A Kind* (Iguane).



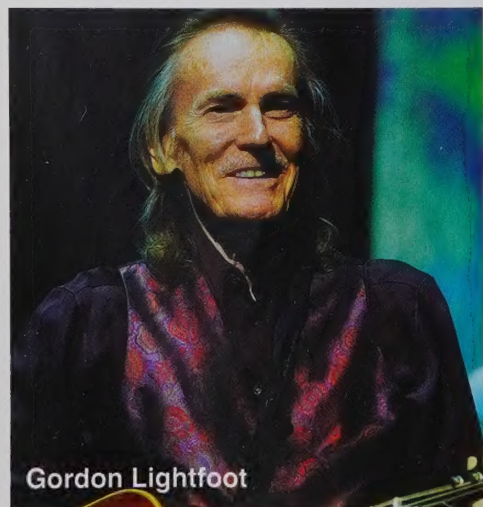
The BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards will celebrate its 15th anniversary at the Royal Albert Hall, Feb. 19. This year's awards will include the first Radio 2 Folk Awards Hall of Fame induction. The first inductee will be Victorian song and dance collector **Cecil Sharp** – widely regarded as a key figure who helped lay the foundations for the first folk revival in the early 20th century.

Categories and nominees for the event, which can be heard in Canada at [www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/on-air](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio2/on-air), include: Best Album: **Child Ballads**, **Anaïs Mitchell & Jefferson Hamer**; **The Full English**, **The Full English**; **Hidden Seam**, **Lisa Knapp**; **Vagrant Stanzas**, **Martin Simpson**; **Won't Be Long Now**, **Linda Thompson** Folk Singer of the Year: **Bella Hardy**, **Fay Hield**, **Lisa Knapp**, and **Lucy Ward**; Best Group of the Year: **Breabach**: **The Full English**, **Lau**, and **Melrose Quartet**.

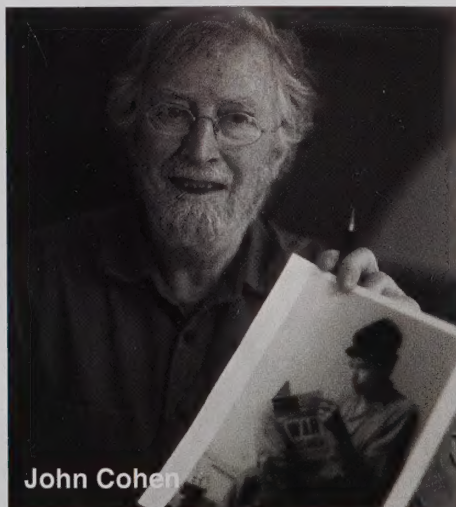
**Bellowhead**, **Suzanne Vega**, **Clannad** and **The Fisherman's Friends** will all perform live



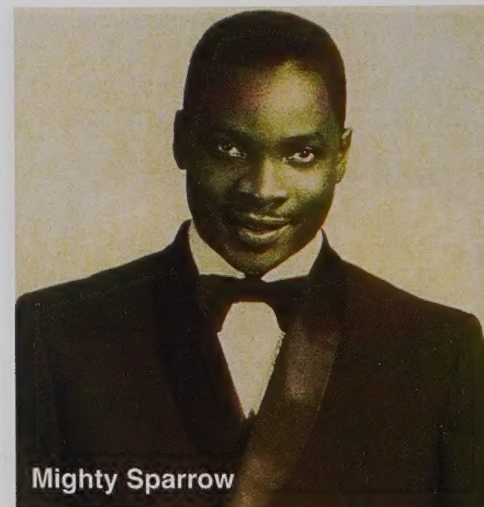
The death of **Mighty Sparrow**, the 'Calypso King of the World', appears vastly exaggerated. Numerous accounts of his death appeared throughout mid-October on various social media sites posted by the chatterati. While Sparrow, born **Slinger Francisco**, was in a coma in a New York City hospital in early September after reportedly suffering a stroke, he has since regained consciousness and is making a steady recovery, his daughter **Michelle Francisco** told the *Barbados News Leader*. Sparrow, 78, was in New York to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Trinidad and Tobago Consulate.



Gordon Lightfoot



John Cohen



Mighty Sparrow



# The Canadian Folk Music Awards 2013

Mitch Podolak, the legendary Winnipeg-based folk impresario, was honoured with the Unsung Hero Of Folk Music Award at the CFMA's gala event Nov. 10 in Calgary for his exceptional contributions to Canadian folk music. Podolak's storied career includes founding the Winnipeg and Vancouver folk festivals and playing a significant role starting others in Edmonton, Calgary, and Canso. He is currently the executive producer of the Home Routes house concert circuit.

Daniel Lapp received Roots Music Canada's annual Innovator of the Year Award for his ongoing involvement with the B.C. Fiddle Orchestra at the event, which included live performances by Jean Hewson and Christina Smith, The Fretless, The Good Lovelies, Amelia Curran, Lorne Elliott, and James Keelaghan and Oscar Lopez.

The complete list of categories, winners, and their recordings include: Solo Artist of the Year, Lynn Miles, *Downpour*; Ensemble of the Year, Good Lovelies, *Live at Revolution*; Contemporary Singer of the Year, Ian Sherwood, *Live At The Hive*; Pushing the Boundaries, Jaron Freeman-Fox & The Opposite of Everything, *Jaron Freeman-Fox & The Opposite of Everything*; English Songwriter of the Year, David Francey, *So Say We All*; French Songwriter of the Year, Dany Placard, *Démon vert*; Aboriginal Songwriter of the Year, Nancy Mike of The Jerry Cans, *Nunavuttitut*; World Solo Artist of the Year, Jorge Miguel, *Flamenco Guitar*; Young Performer of the Year, Kierah, *Stonemason's Daughter*; Traditional Singer of the Year, Pharis Romero, *Long Gone Out West Blues*; New/Emerging Artist of the Year, Mo Kenney, *Mo Kenney*; World Group Artist of the Year, Jaffa Road, *Where The Light Gets In*; Traditional Album of the Year, Mary Jane Lamond and Wendy MacIsaac, *Seinn*; Contemporary Album of the Year, Justin Rutledge, *Valleyheart*; Instrumental Group of the Year, Jaron Freeman-Fox & The Opposite of Everything, *Jaron Freeman-Fox & The Opposite of Everything*; Vocal Group of the Year, Good Lovelies, *Live at Revolution*; Children's Album of the Year, Helen Austin, *Always Be A Unicorn*; Instrumental Solo Artist of the Year, Chrissy Crowley, *Last Night's Fun*; Producer of the Year, David Travers-Smith.



Photo: by Ian Jones

Mitch Podolak



Photo: by Graham Lindsey

Amelia Curran



Photo: by Ian Jones

Chrissy Crowley



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Christina Smith



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Allison De Groot - Oh My Darling



Photo: by Graham Lindsey

Oscar Lopez



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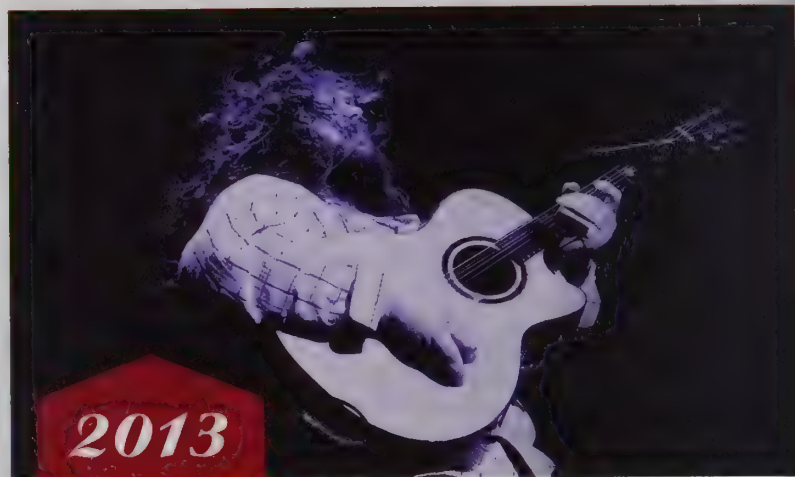
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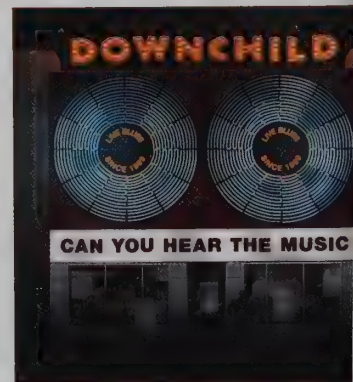
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## Phil Chevron 1957 - 2013

Phil Chevron, a trailblazing figure in Irish music, died Oct. 8 in Dublin of esophageal cancer. He was 56, writes Roddy Campbell.

While best known as the guitarist with The Pogues and author of one of their signature songs about Irish emigration, *Thousands Are Sailing*, recorded on *If I Should Fall From Grace With God* (1988), Chevron, born Philip Ryan, first rose to prominence as the frontman for the Radiators From Space—the first punk band to emerge from Dublin. Buoyed by their hit single *Television Screen*, which appears on their debut album, *TV Tubeheart* (1977), they moved to London, shortened their name to The Radiators and recorded *Ghostown* (1979). Produced by Tony Visconti, whose album credits included David Bowie, The Moody Blues, T. Rex, and The Strawbs, it garnered widespread acclaim. The band, though, struggled in London and broke up in 1981. Still, several of the songs Chevron wrote for The Radiators endured, most notably the *Ballad Of Kitty Ricketts* (covered by Mary Coughlan) and *The Song Of The Faithful Departed* (covered by Christy Moore).

In 1981, Chevron recorded *Songs From Bill's Dancehall*—an EP of Berthold Brecht and Kurt Weill songs, which he performed live with Moving Hearts.

Now living permanently in London amidst the large Irish community in Camden Town, Chevron took a job at the record

store Rock On, where he met Elvis Costello and Shane MacGowan, The Pogues' vocalist. Costello would produce Chevron's take on Brendan Behan's *The Captains And The Kings*. And Chevron in turn would produce The Men They Couldn't Hang's acclaimed debut album *Night Of A Thousand Candles*.

In 1985, he joined The Pogues to cover for banjo player Jem Finer while his wife, Marcia, gave birth to their second child. Chevron had never played banjo before but The Pogues' manager, Frank Murray, who also held Chevron's contract, talked the band into hiring his man. Subsequently, MacGowan gave up playing guitar and Chevron filled the breach.

He first recorded with The Pogues on their Elvis Costello-produced breakthrough LP, *Rum, Sodomy and The Lash* (1985), and would stay with the band until 1994, before being forced to leave due to severe ill health caused by drug and alcohol dependence. Once clean, he would become The Pogues' unofficial archivist, compiling the five-disc box set *Just Look Them Straight in the Eye and Say: Poguemahone!* (2008). He recorded a solo version of *Thousands Are Sailing* for the soundtrack to the wonderful 1991 BBC documentary about Irish music, *Bringing It All Back Home*.

Chevron came out as being gay in the '80s. "Being gay and growing up in Ireland in the 1970s was a terrifying experience for any young man," he said. "I decided to come out when I was in The Pogues because I thought, 'Well, here's an all-drinking, all-rousing, all-shagging, all stay-up-all-night sort of macho band which has me, too.'"

## Ken Palmer 1948 - 2013

Canadian bluegrass icon and founder member of the Dixie Flyers, Ken Palmer, died, Oct. 30 of pneumonia following heart surgery. He was 65, writes Roddy Campbell.

Palmer was born in Montreal, Oct. 5, 1948, and grew up in Port Stanley, ON. He played mandolin and formed the Dixie Flyers in London, ON, in 1974. Their alumni includes noted songwriter Willie P. Bennett, Prairie Oyster fiddler John P. Allen, and Dolly Parton's banjo player, John Talbot. The Dixie Flyers recorded nine albums for such labels as Boot, Stony Plain and their own Flat Top Records. They performed at the Mariposa and Winnipeg folk festivals. At the Carlisle Bluegrass Festival in 1975, they met Bill Monroe. He subsequently invited them play at his Bean Blossom Festival in Indiana.

Recalling his initial meeting with the bluegrass legend, Palmer said: "We came off the stage, and Bill Monroe was standing there, and he said, 'You boys are pretty good'. Here's the guy that invented the music, and he's there waiting for us when we come off the stage."

Besides being a wonderful musician, Palmer led a full and colourful life. He hosted CBC Radio's *The Country Music Perspective*; co-ordinated the talent for Smale's Pace—one of the country's most influential folk clubs, which hosted the likes of Bruce Cockburn; ran the local Sam The Record Man store; and was the artistic director of Home County Folk Festival from 1990-2005. Palmer retired from performing in 2010 due to ill health.



Dixie Flyers — circa 1974.  
l to r: Willie P. Bennett,  
Ken Palmer, Bert Baumbach,  
Brian Abbey and Dennis  
LePage





Tim Leacock, T. Buckley, Derek Pulliam

## T. Buckley

Call it the musical gateway drug. For young country singer/songwriters, particularly those who grew up with twang-loving parents, there is usually an album or show that finally convinces them that the genre is not just tragically unhip music for old people.

Calgary's T. Buckley had two such eureka moments, which came to him at a relatively late age. One was listening to Neil Young's *Harvest*, certainly one of the more sturdy bridges between classic rock and folk-country sounds.

The other was a concert of Texas all-star songwriters that he attended eight years ago.

"My dad took me to see Joe Ely, Guy Clark, Lyle Lovett, and John Hiatt," says Buckley, in an interview at Calgary's Ship and Anchor Pub. "It blew me away. I was probably about 21 or something like that."

At roughly the same time, Buckley became interested in Western Canadian history as seen through the regional storytelling of Corb Lund and Ian Tyson. That eventually led him "full-throttle" into more bedrock country strains such as Hank Williams.

So the 29-year-old's sophomore record, *Northern Country Soul*, has the assured

feel of an artist who has dutifully done his homework.

The title track sounds a bit like a John Hiatt tune. The playful shuffle of *Country Bound* has a certain Lyle Lovett feel to it. *On a Wire* channels Springsteen's outlaw folk-rocker side, while *Give Me More* recalls early Steve Earle.

He even tosses in a cover of the salty Guy Clark/Rodney Crowell co-write, *Stuff That Works*.

"(My dad) has always been into that kind of stuff," Buckley says. "When you're growing up and he's listening to it, you're like, 'Oh, man, come on!'. And sure enough, here I am covering a lot of the stuff he had on the stereo at home long before I was wise enough to know what it was."

Buckley—whose first name is Tim but decided to go with T. to avoid confusion with the doomed folksinger of the '60s and '70s—first entered the spotlight in 2010 after picking up first prize in a songwriting competition sponsored by the Calgary Folk Music Festival. That same year he released his full-length debut, *Roll On*, and began earning a reputation as one of Calgary's best-kept musical secrets.

Backed by veteran players Tim Leacock on guitar and mandolin and Derek Pulliam on bass, he even scored a Tuesday night residency at the downtown club Wine-Oh's

that has given him plenty of opportunity to sharpen his live skills and trot out various cover songs.

But songwriting greats aren't the only influences on his writing. Buckley graduated with a degree in Canadian history from the University of Calgary, something that has certainly helped him with story-based tunes such as the touching folk number *The Maritimes*. With a narrative that touches on his own family's pilgrimage west from New Brunswick, the song reveals Buckley's deft touch for conjuring up a sense of place.

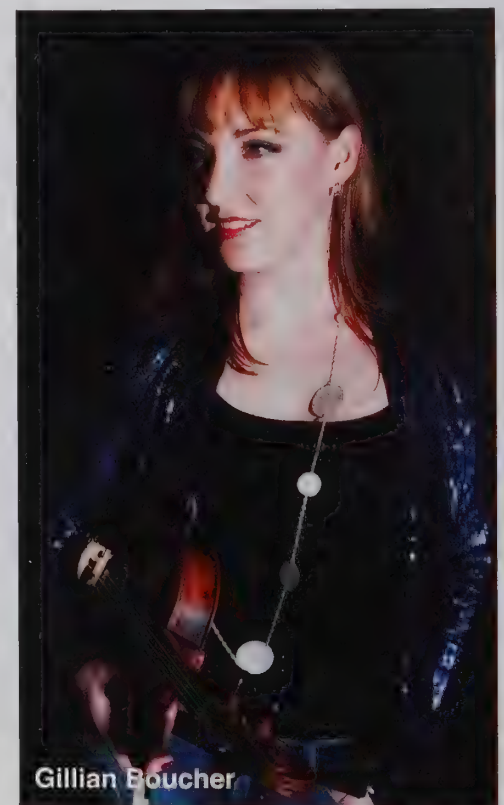
"There are a few songs that I've written over the years that have a historical context or story to them," he says. "Then a lot of the writing and the imagery of the writing is rooted in this part of the country and the history of this country."

— By Eric Volmers

## Gillian Boucher

On a recent late-autumn afternoon, fiddler Gillian Boucher and guitarist Seph Peters were roaring through a set of trad tunes in a packed downtown Halifax pub. Amid the happy clatter in the room, Boucher rolled out gorgeous blasts of jigs and reels, driving away the November damp and chill.

Though she's not a household name on the East Coast—think Natalie, Ashley, or



Gillian Boucher



Buddy—the Cape Breton-bred Boucher may be the most interesting fiddler on the scene today. Raised in tiny Broad Cove along Route 19 that snakes along the rugged west coast of the Cape Breton Highlands, Boucher grew up immersed in the local Gaelic culture.

Yet the bigger world was always calling. Boucher spread her wings as her musical talents matured. She lived in Edinburgh for a few years where she founded the all-female group Maysha, still spends part of her year in New Zealand, and has recently moved back to Nova Scotia after three years living in Ankara, Turkey.

Boucher had been invited to perform in Ankara for the Canadian ambassador on Canada Day in 2010. “Sure, I said, all I need is my fiddle and my passport,” recalls Boucher.

She ended up performing in Ankara, travelling round Turkey, embracing the exotic culture, meeting her now husband and living there for three years.

“I’d come back to Cape Breton for the summers, then pack up and go to New Zealand for a couple of months every winter.” (Boucher has an 11-year-old daughter, Lily Rose, with guitarist Andrew White, who lives in New Zealand.)

All those global experiences have given her a deeper appreciation for the rich cultural foundation back home in Cape Breton.

“Living away made me think of home again and my roots,” says Boucher, herself a complex mix of Scottish, Acadian and Métis background. “When I came back to Canada, I wanted to say I’m here and working on some interesting stuff. That’s where this new album has come from.”

Her new album, *Attuned*, is a collaboration between Boucher and her frequent accompanist and best friend Seph Peters, who grew up “down the road” in Margaree. They recorded the 10 tracks in just two intensive days at Codapop studios in Halifax.

The tunes, sparkling sets of Irish and Scottish trad instrumentals, have long been part of Boucher’s repertoire, shaped and burnished over years of performing them.

“The album is definitely very raw and organic,” explains Boucher. Her debut CD *Elemental*, released in 2009, was a more contemporary and progressive fiddle project. This time around she was determined to

make the music simpler and more intimate.

“We wanted to record that connection between Seph and I when we play together.” The pair has been playing together for more than a decade and their musical interplay fits like a hand in a glove.

Peters’s supportive accompaniment on his old J-50 acoustic guitar is heavily rooted in Irish music, equally at ease with the gentle counterpoint on the slow airs or driving the rhythm through sets of reels and slip jigs.

Attuned is a symbiotic connection that comes only from close friends sharing the same musical vision. “Our music is like a conversation between the fiddle and the guitar.”

— By Sandy MacDonald

## Stephanie Cadman

Fiddler, dancer, choreographer, writer, actor, and ball of fire Stephanie Cadman is dying to talk about *Foggy New Year*, her musical trio’s debut CD. It’s a fine release featuring Jake Charron and Charles James.

“I know Jake from the Ottawa Valley step dancing and fiddling circuit. He’s an incredible pianist who plays at most of the competitions. He is also a wizard

guitar player and tours with people like Liz Carroll—he’s a hot commodity these days. Charles plays double bass with Jaron Freeman Fox and knows the fiddle world really well. They are amazing. I’m lucky to work with them.”

The album was produced by renowned multi-instrumentalist Daniel Lapp. “I met Daniel 10 years ago in *Bowfire*—we were both in the original cast and toured together for three years. It was a no-brainer for me—there was no doubt in my mind he would be perfect for this project.”

Despite having a hectic schedule the multi-talented Cadman is down to earth and easy going. “Daniel, Jake and Charles are the most laid back people you could ever meet, so it was a very relaxed environment. Also, Belle Starr is managed by Starfish, who also manage Blue Rodeo, and they work at the Woodshed Studio in Toronto, so we got a great deal and didn’t have to rush or worry about time.”

The mention of Belle Starr moves the discussion to another of her projects, playing with those CMT chart toppers. “I have known Miranda Mulholland for years and she introduced me to Kendal Carson. It’s the three of us female fiddlers and singers in a rootsy country band ... which



Stephanie Cadman



was different for me because I come from a Celtic background. We all have so many projects on the go and we really encourage each other with our solo careers ... then we come together to do touring, videos and recording."

Cadman's first brush with fame was winning the world tap dancing championships when she was 16. "Dancing is my first love. I did Ottawa Valley step dancing from being 10 years old. As soon as I started tap this whole other world opened up to me. I started doing a fusion of step dancing and tap. When I was 12 I was disqualified from a competition because I was doing tap steps—now everyone is doing it!"

She recently started using the percussive chamber box, a dance platform attached to a looping pedal. "I have never liked anything that was all totally traditional. I have always stepped outside the box," she unintentionally puns.

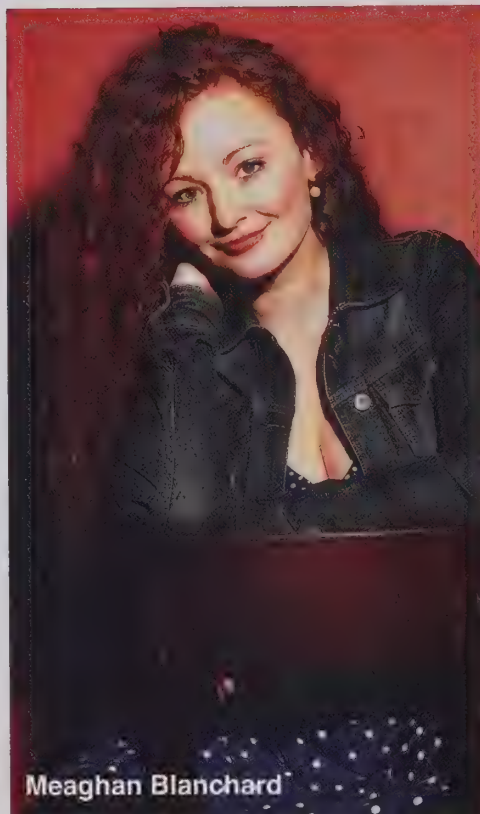
When asked what's next, she tells me she is off to Japan to fiddle and dance with Sharon Shannon and Lunasa. "When I got the phone call my jaw dropped. I said, 'Really ... I am going to be touring with these people in Japan?' I'm so excited! Oh, and I have a new instructional step dance DVD on my website, too. I've never liked to do the same thing all the time!"

— By Tim Readman

## Meaghan Blanchard

Meaghan Blanchard, a Prince Edward Island singer as red-headed as Anne of Green Gables, was playing a songwriters showcase in Memphis. She and three others took turns singing to an audience of seven, she says, and every time she finished a song a man in a fringed cowboy jacket would clap and say, "Oh, my God," and clap some more. Afterward, he told her, "I would love to introduce you to my friend John."

John turned out to be John Keane, the producer best known for his longtime work with R.E.M., Indigo Girls, Nanci Griffith and Billy Bragg. Blanchard did not realize who he was right away. It was early 2012. She had grown up in Hunter River, a rural crossroads dead in the middle of Canada's smallest province. Her mother had played guitar at home and taught her folk finger-picking patterns. Her paternal grandmother had sung in a country band that played



rural dancehalls, instilling in the girl a love for Tammy Wynette, Emmylou Harris and Dolly Parton. Blanchard had just turned 23. She had spent her birthday money getting to the International Folk Alliance conference in Memphis, and was open to talking to anybody.

"He reminded me so much of my father," she recalls of meeting Keane at the hotel bar. "He was gentle and quiet, and said he didn't really like crowds. I can kind of relate to that."

After two hours, Blanchard asked Keane what he did. That night, he heard her play and suggested they make a record together, which they scheduled for that October at his studio in Athens, GA. When he asked if she wanted to fly her band down, she thought of the expense and said, "Do you have any friends in your area you think would be good?"

"I think I can find some," he said.

The record is *She's Gonna Fly*, Blanchard's first full-length CD, released in late 2013. It includes R.E.M./Griffith session players and musicians working with Elton John and Bonnie Raitt—"the most insanely talented group of people," she says.

Blanchard sings in a high, clear, stunning voice. She also sings with a twang, or what she calls a lilt, maybe picked up from her grandmother's country singing, she says, or maybe from the Celtic element in what

some people call the East Coast accent.

"It's hard to say if I'm a country singer or a folksinger, because I feel like both," she says. "A lot of industry folks say, 'No, you need to choose', which I understand would make life easier for everybody but it wouldn't for me."

Alert news watchers might recognize Blanchard's name from Prince William and Kate's visit to P.E.I. in 2011. At the resort town of Dalvay-by-the-Sea, Blanchard began to welcome the duke and duchess, but stumbled on the words and said "dootch," which to some ears sounded like "douche". "Oh my goodness," she said. Everybody laughed, particularly the royal newlyweds, and Blanchard launched into *Waltzing With You*, a song about the love between her grandparents.

— By John Goddard

## Paul J. McInnis

Love lost. Coming to terms with regrets. Finding the right words to say to a forlorn friend when the words are far away. On his latest (*Broken Down Waltz*) troubadour Paul J. McInnis mines these universal subjects with an observant eye. A warm voice invites you to listen long, and listen well. Throughout these 12 timeless tales, the folksinger keeps it simple. The result: a record sure to soothe your soul long after winter's embrace has come and gone.

Before McInnis strikes the first chord, the cover painting of a dilapidated barn makes one pause. The songwriter admits he had this image swimming in his head for a while.

"I've always loved finding old, abandoned farm houses on gravel roads," he explains. "I try to imagine how such beautiful properties and family homes end up as someone's forgotten story. With this in mind I started searching online for the picture I had in my head and came across James M. Coulter's painting entitled *Abandoned Farmhouse*. I emailed him and asked if I could use it for my cover. He replied, 'Sure. If it sells a million copies, send me a cheque!'"

Lucky for the folksinger, his friends—a cast of fine pickers and singers (Brent Hagerman, Scott Wicken, Chris Malleck, and Lauren Reedy)—were also ready, and willing, to help McInnis bring his storied songs to life in a hurry. "We did one rehearsal and recorded the whole album in six hours live





Paul J. McInnis: second from left

off the floor with no overdubs,” he says.

Besides family and friends, the Waterloo, ON-based musician is grateful for a halt on the highway that set his muse in motion to pen the poignant title track.

“That one was a gift,” McInnis says. “The idea for the title came to me while sitting in traffic. I got home and wrote it in an hour. The names are from people in my life

but the three stories that make up the verses were given to me by a muse. I’ll have to thank her if we cross paths again.”

*Grey Sky* is another standout story. Here the songwriter searches for some glimmer of hope to share with others when the veils of sadness are too heavy to take.

“That was written for a dear friend who was going through a difficult time,” McIn-

nis explains. “It’s a factual account of us getting drunk and me having no idea what to say. I wanted to comfort him and take his pain away ... I felt helpless. They’re funny things, friendship and loyalty. You know instinctually what you would do but the right words are sometimes hard to come by.”

Bistros to bars, churches to cafes, and all street corners in between is where you will most likely cross paths with McInnis. Twenty years gone since the artist first found his voice, playing and writing music for the people is what the 34-year-old knows best.

“I’ve never been sure what else to do with my life,” McInnis concludes. “I try other things but I keep coming back to writing, singing, and performing. I’ll sing my heart out for anyone that will listen. I’ll sing to any pub, café, or street corner that wants to hear it. It has nothing to do with money or accolades, it’s the only thing that grounds me and makes me feel a part of something bigger.”

– By David McPherson

## Win Ry Cooder’s Live in San Francisco CD



Possibly America’s greatest ever roots musical maverick, Ry Cooder’s long and storied career includes collaborations with the likes of Flaco Jimenez, The Chieftains, The Buena Vista Social Club and Ali Farka Touré. At one point he was touted to join the Rolling Stones. Cooder has gone on to create a phenomenal body of work including such renowned soundtracks as *Crossroads* and *Paris, Texas* as well as commercial

successes like *Bop Till You Drop*. And now Warner Bros. has generously provided us with six copies of his *Live in San Francisco*. To win one, answer the following questions correctly and email them to [penguineggcompetition@shaw.ca](mailto:penguineggcompetition@shaw.ca) Put Ry Cooder as the subject. Don’t forget to include a mailing address and a contact name in order for us to forward your disc. Failure to do so will result in disqualification. Good luck.

**Q 1:** What Canadian university gave Ry Cooder an honorary doctorate?

**Q 2:** Ry Cooder recently picked gospel songs for which Canadian band to record?

**Q 3:** Name the Hawaiian slack-key guitarist who appears with Cooder on *Chicken Skin Music*?

Answers to the Buddy Guy’s *Rhythm & Blues* contest are: Q1: Willie Dixon. Q2: *Damn Right I’ve Got the Blues*. Q3: Junior

Wells. And the winners are: Michael Zorn, New York, NY; Jennifer Christie, White Rock, BC;

Tom Holland; Airdrie, AB; Maxwell Abercrombie, Montreal, QC; William Ethridge, Portland, OR; Megean Phillips, Regina, SK.



# ALBUMS OF THE YEAR

## CRITICS' FAVOURITE NEW DISCOVERIES OF 2013



David Francey

### Albums of the Year for 2013

1. David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker Music)
2. Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Lynn Miles)
3. Laura Smith, *Everything Is Moving* (Borealis)
4. Pharis and Jason Romero  
*Long Gone Out West Blues* (Lula)
5. Stephen Fearing *Between Hurricanes* (LowdenProud)  
Jaron Freeman-Fox & The Opposite of Everything, *Jaron Freeman-Fox & The Opposite of Everything* (Independent)  
Corin Raymond & The Sundowners  
*Paper Nickels* (Independent)  
Richard Thompson, *Electric* (New West)
9. Deep Dark Woods, *Jubilee* (Six Shooter)  
Patty Griffin, *American Kid* (New West)  
Lee Harvey Osmond, *The Folk Sinner* (Latent)  
Milk Carton Kids, *The Ash & Clay* (Anti-)

### New Discoveries of 2013

1. Milk Carton Kids
2. Lucy Ward
3. Ashley Condon  
The Alan Kelly Gang  
The Claytones  
The Bros. Landreth

David Francey's latest album *So Say We All* has earned him an unprecedented fourth *Penguin Eggs* critics annual Album of the Year Award. His last came in 2004 with *The Waking Hour*.

An assortment of more than 40 folk, roots and world music experts from across the country participated in this our 13th poll. And when the dust settled Francey eased ahead of our only other previous multiple winner, Lynn Miles. Our reviewer, les siemieniuk (he insists on lower case), described *So Say We All* "as 14 lovingly and honestly crafted songs". Clearly, our judges agreed with him wholeheartedly.

Over the years, the New Discoveries category has always produced a close contest and this time around proved to be no exception. Americans The Milk Carton Kids just eked out a win over England's Lucy Ward.

As in years past, we asked the jurors to list their favourite 10 recordings released in Canada in 2013. Every nomination received one point. The winner gathered the most. For the New Discoveries category, we asked for three nominations. A huge thanks, then, to all who kindly participated. And a hearty congratulations to our winners. In the following pages, you can see how our judges voted. Now go out and discover how wonderful these recordings really are.

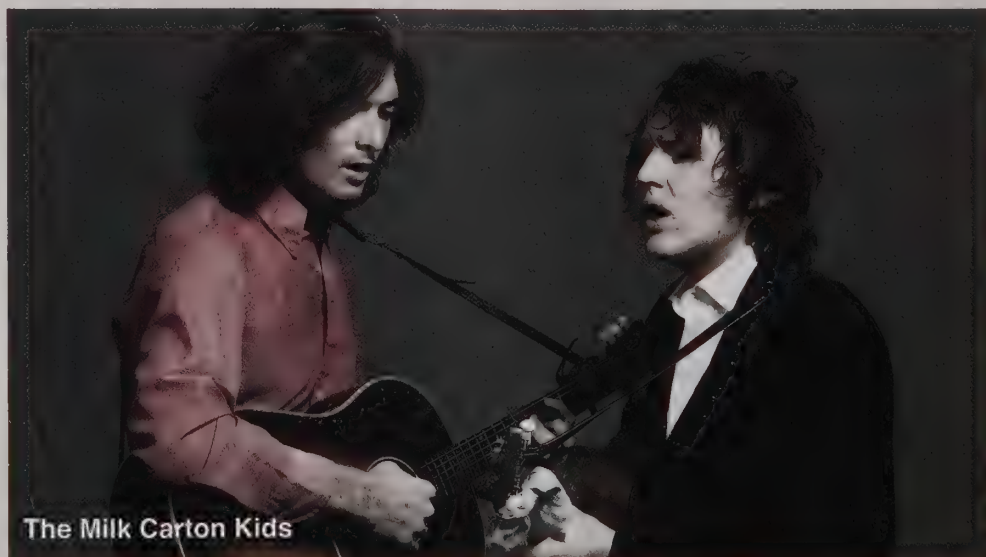
— Roddy Campbell

### Past Album of the Year Winners

- 2012: Rose Cousins, *We Have Made A Spark* (Outside Music)  
2011: Gillian Welch, *The Harrow & the Harvest* (Acony)  
2010: Lynn Miles, *Fall For Beauty* (True North Records)  
2009: Jory Nash, *New Blue Day* (Independent)  
2008: Fred Eaglesmith, *Tinderbox* (A Major Label)  
2007: Alison Krauss & Robert Plant, *Raising Sand* (Rounder)  
2006: Bob Dylan, *Modern Times* (Columbia)  
2005: Lynn Miles, *Love Sweet Love* (True North)  
2004: David Francey, *The Waking Hour* (Laker Music)  
2003: David Francey, *Skating Rink* (Laker Music)  
2002: Harry Manx, *Wise And Otherwise* (NorthernBluest)  
2001: David Francey, *Far End of Summer* (Laker Music)

### Past New Discovery Winners

- 2012: Cold Specks  
2011: The Barr Brothers, Carrie Elkin, Pokey LaFarge, New Country Rehab  
2010: The Once  
2009: Kate Reid  
2008: Amelia Curran  
2007: Little Miss Higgins, Seth Lakeman, Catherine MacLellan  
2006: Crooked Still  
2005: Ridley Bent, House of Doc  
2004: Fiamma Fumana  
2003: Rae Spoon  
2002: Ruthie Foster, Kathleen Edwards  
2001: Harry Manx



The Milk Carton Kids



DAVID FRANCEY SO SAY WE ALL



**Mike Barker:** Artistic director, Folk Under The Clock, Peterborough, ON.: Bombino, *Nomad* (Nonesuch); Duncan Chisholm, *Affric* (Copperfish); Eric Clapton, *Old Sock* (Bushbranch); Steve Earle, *The Low Highway* (New West); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker Music); James Keelaghan, *History The First 24 Years* (Borealis); Harry Manx, *Om Suite Ohm* (Dog MyCat); Richard Thompson Electric (New West); The Wilderness of Manitoba, *Island of Echoes* (Popguru Record Company)

**New Discoveries:** The Wilderness of Manitoba, Quique Escamilla, Tim Edey

**Yves Bernard:** Journalist, *Le Devoir*, Radio host, CIBL-FM, CKIN-FM: A Tribe Called Red, *Nation II Nation* (Independent); Azam Ali & Loga R. Torkian, *Lamentation of Swans—A Journey Towards Silence* (Terrestrial Lane); Karim Diouf, *Adouna* (Audiogram); Kobo Town, *Jumbie in the Jukebox* (Stonetree); Lavanya, *Dharani—Earth* (Independent); Les Chauffeurs à pieds, *Les chats jaunes ne meurent jamais* (Scorbut); Maja & David, *Nord* (Go); Amanda Martinez, *Manana* (Independent); Quetango Quartet, *Musica Urbana* (Independent); Réveillons!, *à la chasse pour chasser* (Scorbut)

**New Discoveries:** Boogat, Siach Hasadeh, Vox Sambou

**Allison Brock:** Host of *Widecut Country* on CKUA:

Robbie Fulks, *Gone Away Backward* (Bloodshot); Patty Griffin, *American Kid* (New West); Emmylou Harris & Rodney Crowell, *Old Yellow Moon* (Nonesuch); Tim Hus, *Western Star* (Stony Plain); Jim Lauderdale, *Old Time Angels* (Sky Crunch); Lee Harvey Osmond, *The Folk Sinner* (Latent); Mavericks, *In Time* (Universal); Lori McKenna, *Massachusetts* (Hoodie Songs); Corin Raymond & The Sundowners, *Paper Nickels* (Local Rascal); Kelly Willis & Bruce Robison, *Cheater's Game* (Thirty Tigers)

**New Discoveries:** Carper Family, Matt Patershuk, Sykamore

**Allison Brown:** CJAM 99.1fm Windsor/Detroit, *Border City Roots: The Barn Birds, The Barn Birds* (Independent); Erin Costelo, *We Can Get Over* (Independent); The Good Family, *The Good Family Album* (Latent); Dan Livingstone & The Griffintown Jug Addicts, *Dan Livingstone & The Griffintown Jug Addicts* (Independent); New Country Rehab, *Ghost Of Your Charms* (Independent); Corin Raymond & The Sundowners, *Paper Nickels* (Independent); Pharis & Jason Romero, *Long Gone Out West Blues* (Independent); Ivan Rosenberg, *Oldies And Old Time* (Independent); Richie Stearns & Rosie Newton, *Tractor Beam* (Independent)

**New Discoveries:** Mike Galbraith, Milk Carton Kids; Brendan J. Stephens

**Roddy Campbell:** Editor and publisher, *Penguin Eggs*: Sam Baker, *say grace* (Sam Baker Records); Capercaillie, *At The Heart Of It All* (Compass); The Deep Dark Woods, *Jubilee* (Six Shooter); Good For Grapes, *The Man On The Page* (Pheromone); Blind Willie Johnson, *The Rough Guide* (World Music Network); Karine Polwart, *Traces* (Borealis); Jason and Pharis Romero, *Lone Gone Out West Blues* (Lula); Laura Smith, *Everything Is Moving* (Borealis); Linda Thompson, *Won't Be Long Now* (Pettifer Sounds); Lucy Ward, *Single Flame* (Navigator Records)

**New Discoveries:** The Alan Kelly Gang, Kacy & Clayton, Lucy Ward

**Dave Carmichael:** Program co-ordinator, Deep Roots Music Festival, Wolfville: Bruce Cockburn, *Pacing The Cage* (True North); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker Music); Jaron Freeman-Fox & The Opposite of Everything, *Jaron Freeman-Fox & The Opposite of Everything* (Independent); Lee Harvey Osmond, *The Folk Sinner* (Latent); Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Continental Song City); Ruth Moody, *These Wilder Things* (True North); (Independent); Laura Smith, *Everything Is Moving* (Borealis); Lindy Vopnfjörð, *Young Waverer* (Independent); Donovan Woods, *Don't Get Too Grand* (Aporia Records/Outside)

**New Discoveries:** Canailles, Scott Cook, Les Hay Babies

**Lark Clark:** Host, *World Spinning*, CKUA Radio Network: Mulatu Astatke, *Sketches of Ethiopia* (Harmonia Mundi); Family Atlantica, *Family Atlantica* (Soundway); The Garifuna Collective, *Ayo* (Cumbancha); Nuru Kane, *Exile* (World Music Network); Kobo Town, *Jumbie In The Jukebox* (Cumbancha); Bassekou Kouyate & Ngoni Ba, *Jama Ko* (Out/Here Records); Ana Moura, *Desfado* (Universal); Joyce Moreno, *Tudo* (Far Out UK); Ballake Sissoko, *At Peace* (Six Degrees).

**New Discoveries:** Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino, Pizzica Indiviolata, Ponderosa Music And Art

**Steve Clarke:** Host, *Acoustic Planet*, CHES Radio, Erin, ON: Jay Aymar, *Overtime* (Independent); Stephen Fearing, *Between Hurricanes* (Lowden Proud); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker); Jadea Kelly, *Clover* (Independent); Rob Lutes, *Bravest of Birds* (Lucky Bear); John McCutcheon, *22 Days* (FolkMusic); Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Independent); Corin Raymond and the Sundowners, *Paper Nickels* (Local Rascal); Pharis and Jason Romero, *Long Gone Out West Blues* (Lula); Laura Smith, *Everything Is Moving* (Borealis);

**New Discoveries:** Ross Douglas, Hannah Shira Naiman, Steven Taetz

**Tom Coxworth:** Host/producer, *Folk Routes*, CKUA Radio Network: Rodney Brown, *Fort William* (Starsilk); Basia Bulat, *Tall Tall Shadow* (Secret City); David





# ALBUMS OF THE YEAR

Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker Music); Milk Carton Kids, *The Ash & Clay* (Anti-); Tom Russell, *Aztec Jazz* (Outside); Justin Rutledge, *Valleyheart* (Outside); Martin Simpson, *Vagrant Stanzas* (Topic); Laura Smith, *Everything Is Moving* (Borealis); Linda Thompson, *Won't Be Long Now* (Topic); Richard Thompson, *Electric* (New West)

**New Discoveries:** Good for Grapes, Lauren Mann, The Staves

**Ian Davies:** Artistic director, Acoustic Muse Concerts & Cuckoo's Nest Folk Club, London, ON: Brother Sun, *Some Part of the Truth* (Independent); Custodio Castelo, *InVentus* (Arc Music); Darden Smith, *Love Calling* (Compass); Dervish, *The Thrush in the Storm* (Whirling Discs); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker); Genticorum, *Enregistre Live* (Independent); Harry Manx, *Om Suite Ohm* (Dog My Cat); Melrose Quartet, *Fifty Verses* (Independent); Laura Smith, *Everything Is Moving* (Borealis); De Temps Antan, *Ce Monde Ici-bas* (L-Abe/Select)

**New Discoveries:** Blackbeard's Tea Party, 4Square, Navarra

**Greg Davis & and Craig Dunsmuir:** Owner/manager and assistant buyer, respectively, Soundscapes, Toronto, ON: Sam Amidon, *Bright Sunny South* (Nonesuch); Devendra Banhart, *Mala* (Nonesuch); Blind Boys of Alabama, *I'll Find A Way* (Sony Masterworks); Cass McCombs, *Big Wheel And Others* (Domino); Devon Sproule & Mike O'Neill, *Colours* (Tin Angel); Mavis Staples, *One True Vine* (Anti-); Doug Tielli, *Keresley* (Tin Angel); Steve Tilston, *An Acoustic Confusion* (Lion Productions); Various artists, *London Is The Place For Me 5 & 6* (Honest Jon's); Kurt Vile, *Wakin On A Pretty Daze* (Matador)

**New Discoveries:** Nathan Abshire, Steve Gunn, Sarah Siskind

**Andy Donnelly:** Host, *The Celtic Show*, CKUA Radio Network: Breabach, *Urlar* (Stash Media); Capercaille, *At The Heart Of It All* (Vertical Records); Celtic Fusion Illusion, *Walk The Tweed* (Independent);

Eamon Coyne and Kris Drever, *Storymap* (Compass); Lau, *Race The Loser* (Compass); Paul McKenna Band, *Elements* (Compass); Karine Polwart, *Traces* (Borealis); Laura Smith, *Everything Is Moving* (Borealis); Lucy Ward, *Adelphi Has To Fly* (Navigator); Whalebone, *Runes* (Whalebone)

**New Discoveries:** Over The Rhine, Rachel Sermani, Lucy Ward

**Steve Edge:** Artistic director, Rogue Folk Club, Vancouver, BC, and CiTR radio DJ: Eric Bibb, *Jericho Road* (Stony Plain); Kat Danser, *Baptized By The Mud* (Black Hen); The Full English, *The Full English* (Topic); Sarah Jarosz, *Build Me Up From Bones* (Sugar Hill); Bassekou Kouyate & Ngoni ba, *Jama Ko* (Out Here); Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Independent); Anais Mitchell & Jefferson Hamer, *Child Ballads* (Wilderland); Pharos & Jason Romero, *Long Gone Out West Blues* (Independent); Linda Thompson, *It Won't Be Long Now* (Topic); Richard Thompson, *Electric* (Shout Factory)

**New Discoveries:** Coig, The Elephant Revival, Lucy Ward

**Steve Fruitman:** Producer and host, Sugar Camp Music: Kim Beggs, *Beauty and Breaking* (Independent); The Blue Warblers, *Birds* (Independent); Scott Cook, *One More Time Around* (Independent); Jessica Stuart Few, *Two Sides To Every Story* (Independent); Jaron Freeman-Fox & The Opposite of Everything, *Jaron Freeman-Fox & The Opposite of Everything* (Independent); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker Music); Tim Hus, *Western Star* (Stony Plain); James Keelaghan, *History: The First 25 Years* (Borealis); Mendelson Joe, *Art Is The Healer* (Old Bold); Hannah Shira Naiman, *Tether My Heart* (Independent)

**New Discoveries:** The Bombadils, The Claytones, Jessica Stuart Few

**Brian Gladstone:** Musician and artistic director of Winter Roots: Guy Davis, *Juba Dance* (M.C. Records); Bob Dylan, *Another Self Portrait (1969-1971): The Bootleg Series Vol. 10* (Columbia/Legacy); Glen Horn-

blast, *Once in a Blue Moon* (Independent); Mumford & Sons, *The Road To Red Rocks* (Glassnote); Tony Quarrington, *Gathering Place* (Independent); Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Independent); Sooz Schlinger, *Soozmusic* (Independent); Swamperalla, *Leopard Skin Coat* (Independent); Dave Van Ronk, *Down in Washington Square: The Smithsonian Folkways Collection* (Smithsonian Folkways); Various artists, *Way To Blue: The Songs Of Nick Drake* (Storysound)

**New Discoveries:** Don Campbell, Mira Meikle, Whiskey Epiphany

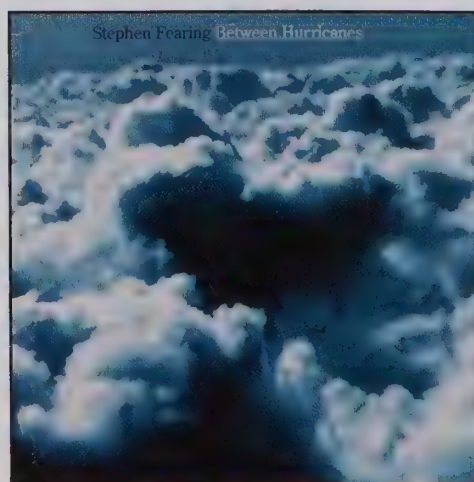
**Barry Hammond:** Reviewer, *Penguin Eggs*: Amanda Brecker, *Blossom* (Decca); Eric Clapton, *Blues Breakers* (Mojo); Steve Earle, *The Low Highway* (New West); Early Autumn Break, *Farewell To The Juvenile Heart Vol. 1* (One Sunny Day); Steve Martin & Edie Brickell, *Love Has Come For You* (Rounder Records); Tift Merritt, *Traveling Alone* (Yep Roc); Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Independent); Willie Nelson & Family, *Let's Face The Music and Dance* (Legacy); Tom Rush, *Celebrates 50 Years of Music* (Appleseed); Various artists, *Swamp People* (Rounder)

**New Discoveries:** Early Autumn Break, Lisa Hannigan, Milk Carton Kids

**Phil Harries:** *Penguin Eggs* contributor: The Avett Brothers, *The Magpie and the Dandelion* (Universal Republic); Sam Baker, *Say Grace* (Independent); Billy Bragg, *Tooth & Nail* (Essential Music); The Deep Dark Woods, *Jubilee* (Six Shooter); Emmylou Harris and Rodney Crowell, *Old Yellow Moon* (Nonesuch); The Head and the Heart, *Let's Be Still* (Sub Pop); Laura Marling, *Once I Was An Eagle* (Ribbon Music); Lindi Ortega, *Tin Star* (Last Gang); The Milk Carton Kids, *The Ash and Clay* (Anti-); The Sadies, *Internal Sounds* (Outside Music)

**New Discoveries:** Beans on Toast, Cousin Harley, Wake Owl

**Patrick Langston:** Arts contributor, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Penguin Eggs*, others: James Cotton, *Cotton Mouth Man*





(Fontana North); Caitlin Rose, *The Stand-In* (ATO); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker); Patty Griffin, *American Kid* (New West); Emmylou Harris & Rodney Crowell, *Old Yellow Moon* (Nonesuch); Jason Isbell, *Southeastern* (Thirty Tigers/Southeastern); Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Lynn Miles); Phosphorescent, *Muchacho* (Dead Oceans); Steve Poltz, *Running Wild: The Life of Dayton O. Hyde* (Arrival Records); Justin Rutledge, *Valleyheart* (Outside Music)

**New Discoveries:** Phosphorescent, Steve Poltz, The Wilderness of Manitoba

**Roger Levesque:** Freelance music writer: Debashish Bhattacharya, *Beyond The Ragasphere* (Riverboat); Diana Braithwaite and Chris Whiteley, *Scrap Metal Blues* (Electro-Fi); Blind Boys Of Alabama, *I'll Find A Way* (Sony); Ry Cooder, *Live At The Great American Music Hall* (Nonesuch); Kat Danser, *Baptized By The Mud* (Outside Music); Stephen Fearing, *Between Hurricanes* (Lowden Proud); Mary Gauthier, *Live At Blue Rock* (In The Black); Kobo Town, *Jumble In The Jukebox* (Cumbancha); Lee Harvey Osmond, *The Folk Sinner* (Latent); Harry Manx, *Om Suite Ohm* (Dog My Cat)

**New Discoveries:** Fatoumata Diawara, Ivy Mairi, Jey Witte

**Scott Lingley:** Freelance music writer: Calxico, *Algiers* (Anti-); The Deep Dark Woods, *Jubilee* (Six Shooter); Robbie Fulks, *Gone Away Backward* (Bloodshot); Patty Griffin, *American Kid* (New West); Hayden, *Us Alone* (Arts & Crafts); Iron & Wine, *Ghost on Ghost* (4 AD); Man's Gin, *Rebellion Hymns* (Profound Lore); Josh Ritter, *The Beast In Its Tracks* (Pytheas); Tamikrest, *Chatma* (Glitterhouse); Rokia Traore, *Beautiful Africa* (Nonesuch)

**New Discoveries:** DaWangGang, The Melodic, Tamikrest

**Sandy MacDonald:** Freelance music writer, Halifax: Avett Brothers, *Magpie and the Dandelion* (American); The Devil Makes Three, *I'm A Stranger Here* (New West); Jaron Freeman-Fox & The Opposite of

Everything, *Jaron Freeman-Fox & The Opposite of Everything* (Independent); Robbie Fulks, *Gone Away Backwards* (Bloodshot); Patty Griffin, *American Kid* (New West); Hiss Golden Messenger, *Haw* (Paradise of Bachelors); Iron and Wine, *Ghost on Ghost* (Nonesuch); Jason Isbell, *Southeastern* (Southeastern Records); Aoife O'Donovan, *Fossils* (Yep Rock); Ten Strings and a Goat Skin, *Corbeau* (Independent)

**New Discoveries:** Samantha Crain, Mo Kenny, Damien Mullane

**Jana Mackenzie & Gillian Moranz:** Artistic director and assistant AD, respectively, South Country Fair, Fort MacLeod: Born Ruffians, *Birthmarks* (Paper Bag Records); Steve Brockley Band, *LeBoeuf* (Independent); Scott Cook, *One More Time Around* (Independent); Cowpuncher, *Ghost Notes* (Independent); Declan O'Donovan, *Declan O'Donovan* (Independent); July Talk, *July Talk* (Sleepless Records Inc.); Miss Quincy and the Showdown, *Love Me Like the Devil Does* (Independent); Corin Raymond and the Sundowners, *Paper Nickels* (Pinwheel Music); Royal Canoe, *Today We're Believers* (Nevado Music Inc.); Young Benjamins, *Less Argue* (Dollartone Records)

**New Discoveries:** AroarA, Declan O'Donovan, High Society

**Jim Marino:** Host, *Freewheeling Spotlight Show*, *Freewheeling Folk Show & Smokin' Bluegrass Show*, CFMU, Hamilton, ON: Dawn and Marra, *Teaspoons and Tablespoons* (Independent); Teresa Doyle, *Song Road* (Bedlam); Stephen Fearing, *Between Hurricanes* (LowdenProud); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker Music); James Gordon, *Coyote Calling* (Borealis); Lee Harvey Osmond, *The Folk Sinner* (Latent); Tia McGraff, *Break These Chains* (Bandana); Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Independent); 100 Mile House, *Wait With Me* (Chronograph); Tannis Slimmon, *In and Out of Harmony* (Independent).

**New Discoveries:** Ashley Condon, Rob Heath, Barn Katz

**Ian Menzies:** President, Menzies Mixed Media Con-

sulting. Special projects, Calgary Folk Music Festival: Blind Boys of Alabama, *I'll Find A Way* (Sony/BMG); Bombay Dub Orchestra, *Tales From The Grand Bazaar* (Six Degrees); The Bros. Landreth, *Let It Lie* (Independent); Amos Lee, *Mountains of Sorrow Rivers of Song* (Blue Note); Amanda Martinez, *Manana* (Sola/Outside); The Milk Carton Kids, *The Ash and Clay* (Anti-); Aoife O'Donovan, *Fossils* (Yep Roc); Tamikrest, *Chatma* (Glitterbeat); Rokia Traore, *Beautiful Africa* (Nonesuch); The Wood Brothers, *The Muse* (Southern Ground)

**New Discoveries:** The Bros. Landreth, Ashley Condon, Milk Carton Kids

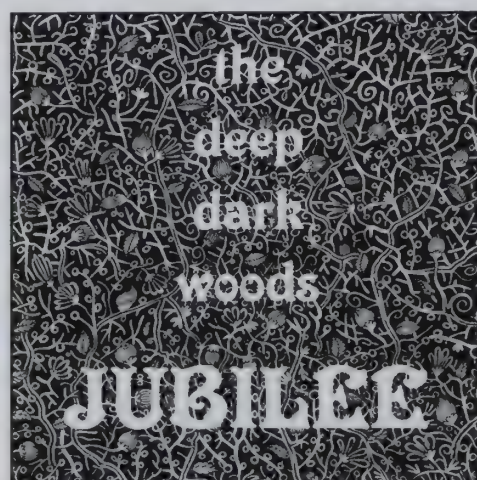
**Julie Miller:** Concert presenter and host, *Ouvrez les Frontières*, CFLX Sherbrooke, QC: Annabelle Chvostek, *Rise* (Borealis); Bon Debarras, *Errance* (Productions de l'onde); Louis-Jean Cormier, *Le Treizieme étage* (Simone); Teresa Doyle, *Song Roads* (Bedlam); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker); Genticorum, *Enregistre Live* (Productions du Moulin); Jorane, *L'Instant aimé* (Columbia); Rob Lutes, *The Bravest Birds* (Independent); Lauren Mann and the Fairly Odd Folk, *Over Land and Sea* (Wanderer); The Stanfields, *For King and Country* (Groundswell)

**New Discoveries:** Dawn & Marra, Jaune, Kyra Shaughnessy

**Tony Montague:** Music journalist, *Georgia Strait*, *fRoots*, *Penguin Eggs*: Briga, *Turbo Folk Stories* (Indie GoGo); Buika, *La Noche Mas Larga* (Warner Music); Capercaillie, *At The Heart Of It All* (Vertical); Catrin Finch & Sekou Keita, *Clychau Dibon* (Astar Mwlden); The Garifuna Collective, *Ayó* (Cumbancha); Bella Hardy, *Battleplan* (Noe); Bruce Molsky, *If It Ain't Here When I Get Back* (Tree Frog Music); Aoife O'Donovan, *Fossils* (Yep Roc); Martin Simpson, *Vagrant Stanzas* (Topic); Rokia Traore, *Beautiful Africa* (Nonesuch)

**New Discoveries:** Briga, Catrin Finch & Sekou Keita, Aoife O'Donovan

**Tom Murray:** Music writer, *Edmonton Journal*: Billy Bragg, *Tooth and Nail* (Essential Music); Richard





# ALBUMS OF THE YEAR

Buckner, *Surrounded* (Merge); Bill Callahan, *Dream River* (Drag City); The Deep Dark Woods, *Jubilee* (Six Shooter); Rita Hosking, *Little Boat* (Independent); Howe Gelb, *The Coincidentalist* (New West); Moustad, *Equestrian Vaulting* (Independent); Phosphorescent, *Muchacho* (Dead Oceans); Daniel Romano, *Come Cry With Me* (Normaltown); Pharis and Jason Romero, *Long Gone Out West Blues* (Independent)

**New Discoveries:** Hiss Golden Messenger, Rita Hosking, Laura Marling

**Peter North:** Freelance journalist, Radio Host, Points North and Deadends And Detours, CKUA: Cindy Churc, *Sad Songs Make Me Happy* (Independent); Stephen Fearing, *Between Hurricanes* (Linus); Steve Martin & Eddie Brickell, *Love Has Come For You* (Rounder); Tony McManus, *Mysterious Boundaries* (Compass); Preservation Hall Jazz Band, *That's It* (Sony); Legacy John Reischmann, *Walk Along John* (Corvus); Chris Robinson Brotherhood, *The Magic Door* (Sony); Boz Scaggs, *Memphis* (429 Records); J.R. Shore, *State Theatre* (Independent); The Time Jumpers, *The Time Jumpers* (Rounder);

**New Discoveries:** Mandolin Orange, Ten Strings and A Goat Skin, The Treasures.

**Rob Oakie:** Executive director, Music PEI: Acres and Acres, *Truth and Sky* (Independent); Meghan Blanchard, *She's Gonna Fly* (Sandbar Music); Ashley Condon, *This Great Compromise* (Laker); Elephant Revival, *These Changing Skies* (Itz Evolving Records); Dennis Ellsworth, *Hazy Sunshine* (Busted Flat); Catrin Finch and Seckou Keita, *Clychau Dibon* (Astar Artes Recordings); Lee Harvey Osmond, *The Folk Sinner* (Independent); Gordie MacKeeman & His Rhythm Boys, *Pickin' N Clickin'* (Independent); Mandolin Orange, *This Side of Jordan* (Yep Roc); Ten Strings and a Goat Skin, *Corbeau* (Independent)

**New Discoveries:** Mandolin Man, Georgia Ruth, Dan Walsh

**Sue Panning:** Associate artistic director, Canmore Folk Music Festival: Annabelle Chvostek, *Rise* (Bo-

realis); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker); Jaron Freeman-Fox and the Opposite of Everything, *Jaron Freeman-Fox and the Opposite of Everything* (Independent); Mo Kenney, *Mo Kenney* (New Scotland); Ruth Moody, *These Wilder Things* (True North); One Hundred Mile House, *Wait With Me* (Chronograph); Pharis and Jason Romero, *Long Gone Out West Blues* (Lula); The Wilderness of Manitoba, *Islands of Echoes* (Pheromone Recordings)

**New Discoveries:** Dawn & Marra, The Lone Bellow, Cahalen Morrison and Eli West

**John Prentice:** Planet Mainstage (101.5 UMF): Amelia Curran, *Spectator* (Six Shooter); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Red House); Michael Franti and Spearhead, *All People* (Capitol); Jaron Freeman Fox & The Opposite of Everything, *Jaron Freeman Fox & The Opposite of Everything* (Independent); The Garifuna Collective, *Ayo* (Stonetree Records/Cumbancha); Mary Jane Lamond and Wendy MacIsaac, *Seinn* (Turtlemusik); Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Cold Girl Music); Oliver Mtukudzi, *Sarawoga* (Tuku Music); Laura Smith, *Everything Is Moving* (Borealis); Hans Theessink, *Wishing Well* (Blue Groove)

**New Discoveries:** The Bros. Landreth, Daniel Champagne, Ben Sollee, Let It Lie

**Steve Pritchard:** Roots radio programmer, CIUT, Toronto: Leonard Cohen, *Songs From a Room* (Sony); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker); James King, *Three Chords and the Truth* (Allmusic); Good Lovelies, *Live At Revolution* (Six Shooter); Hannah Naiman, *Tether My Heart* (Merriweather); Kristine Schmitt and Her Special Powers, *EP for the OCF* (Independent); Junior Sisk and Joe Mullens, *Hall of Fame Bluegrass* (Rebel); The South Carolina Broadcasters, *Short Time To Stay Here* (Independent); The Spinney Brothers, *No Borders* (Mountain Fever); Neil Young, *Live At the Cellar Door* (Warner)

**New Discoveries:** Meghan Blanchard, The Lost Girls, Whitehorse

**Tim Readman:** Musician, artistic adviser Celtic Fest: Abramson Singers, *Late Riser* (Independent); Quinn Bachand, *Brishen* (Independent); Chrissy Crowley, *Last Night's Fun* (Independent); Niamh Dunne, *Portraits* (Independent); Bella Hardy, *Battleplan* (Noe); Fay Hield and Hurricane Party, *Orfeo* (Topic); Brian Miller and Randy Gosa, *The Falling of the Pine* (Independent); Oirialla, *Oirialla* (Lughnasa Music); Thereafter, *Ceremony* (Go Strong Records); The Young'Uns, *When Our Grandfathers Said No*, (Navigator/Compass)

**New Discoveries:** Mary Jane Lamond & Wendy MacIsaac, The Punch Brothers, Thereafter

**Mike Regenstreif:** Journalist, blogger (frb.blogspot.com, broadcaster and folk music maven: Eric Bibb, *Jericho Road* (Stony Plain); Bob Dylan, *Another Self Portrait (1969-1971)*); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker); Diana Jones, *Museum of Appalachia Recordings* (Proper); Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Lynn Miles); Tom Russell, *Aztec Jazz* (Frontera); Laura Smith, *Everything is Moving* (Borealis); Sweet Honey in the Rock, *A Tribute: Live! Jazz at Lincoln Center* (Appleseed); Dave Van Ronk, *Down in Washington Square: The Smithsonian Folkways Collection* (Smithsonian Folkways); Various Artists, *Sing Me the Songs: Celebrating the Works of Kate McGarrigle* (Nonesuch)

**New Discoveries:** The Claytones, Jolie Goodnight, Pharis & Jason Romero

**Jeff Robson:** Host, *Tell the Band To Go Home and Steel Belted Radio*, CJUM, Winnipeg: Dustin Bentall & The Smokes, *You Are An Island* (Aporia); Express & Company, *Ontario* (Seventh Fire); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker); Jason Isbell, *Southeastern* (Thirty Tigers); Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Independent); John Moreland, *In The Throes* (Last Chance); David Myles, *In The Nighttime* (Turtlemusik); Scott Nolan & Joanna Miller, *North/South* (Transistor 66); Corin Raymond & The Sundowners, *Paper Nickels* (Local Rascal); Leeroy Stagger, *Truth Be Sold* (Gold Lake)

**New Discoveries:** Express & Company, July Talk, Sean Rowe





# ALBUMS OF THE YEAR

**Mike Sadava:** Victoria-based freelance journalist and musician: Sarah Alden, *Fists of Violets* (Independent); Scott Cook, *One More Time Around* (Independent); Teresa Doyle, *Song Road* (Bedlam); Michael Dunn and the Moanin' After, *Come On Out Back to the Shed Tonight* (Independent); Terry Gillespie, *Blue Soul* (Independent); Tim O'Brien and Darrell Scott, *Memories and Moments* (Full Skies); Peter Oustroushko, *The Mando Chronicles* (Red House); Corin Raymond, *Paper Nickels* (Local Rascal); John Reischman, *Walk Along John* (Corvus); Frank Solivan and Dirty Kitchen, *On the Edge* (Compass)

**New Discoveries:** Quinn Bachand, Charles Bradley, Milk Carton Kids

**Jason Schneider:** Assistant editor, Exclaim!; author of *Whispering Pines: the Northern Roots of American Music* (ECW Press): The Deep Dark Woods, *Jubilee* (Six Shooter); Howe Gelb, *The Coincidentalist* (New West); Valerie June, *Pushin' Against A Stone* (Concord); The Milk Carton Kids, *The Ash & Clay* (Anti-); Lindi Ortega, *Tin Star* (Last Gang); Josh Ritter, *The Beast In Its Tracks* (Outside); Daniel Romano, *Come Cry With Me* (Normaltown); The Sadies, *Internal Sounds* (Outside); Mavis Staples, *One True Vine* (Anti-); Richard Thompson, *Electric* (New West)

**New Discoveries:** The Highest Order, Valerie June, The Milk Carton Kids

**les siemieniuk:** General manager, Calgary Folk Music Festival: The Avett Brothers, *Magpie and the Dandelion* (Universal Republic); Coal Creek Boys, *Rose Town: Whiskey and Wine* (Independent); Cowboy Junkies, *The Kennedy Suite* (Latent); Stephen Fearing, *Between Hurricanes* (Lowden Proud); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker); 100 Mile House, *Wait With Me* (Independent); AJ Roach, *Pleistocene* (Independent); Richard Thompson, *Electric* (New West); Frank Turner, *Tape Deck Heart* (Xtra Mile); John Wort Hannam, *Brambles and Thorns* (Borealis)

**New Discoveries:** Sam Lee, AJ Roach, Treacherous Orchestra

**Lyle Skinner:** Host/producer, *Prairie Ceilidh*, CKJS Radio 810, Winnipeg, MN, and *Waxies Dargle* CJUM/UMFM 101.5, Winnipeg, MB: Battlefield Band, *Room Enough For All* (Temple); Capercaillie, *At The Heart Of It All* (Vertical/Compass); Clannad, *Nadur* (ARC); The Full English, *The Full English* (Topic); Genticorum, *Enregistre Live* (Les Production Du Moulin); James Keelaghan, *History: The First 25 Years* (Borealis); The Paul McKenna Band, *Elements* (Compass); Ruth Moody, *These Wilder Things* (True North); Colleen Raney, *Here This Is Home* (Little Sea); Heidi Talbot, *Angels Without Wings* (Compass)

**New Discoveries:** The Alan Kelly Band, Burning Bridget Cleary, Niamh Dunne

**Eric Thom:** Music writer, Toronto: Sam Baker, *Say Grace* (Independent); Blue Cactus Choir, *Once in a Bluegrass Moon* (Porgy); Deborah Holland, *Vancouver* (RageOn); Anne Janelle, *Too Long At The Fair* (Independent); Harrison Kennedy, *Soulscape* (Electro-Fi); Claire Lynch Band, *Dear Sister* (Compass); Boz Scaggs, *Memphis* (429 Records); Darden Smith, *Love Calling* (Compass); Watermelon Slim and the Workers, *Bull Goose Rooster* (NorthernBlues Music); Mike Zito & The Wheel, *Gone To Texas* (Ruf Records)

**New Discoveries:** Andrea Balestra, Jerry Leger and the Situation, Karine Polwart

**Jan Vanderhorst:** Host, *Just Us Folk*, Country 1380, Brantford, ON / 100.7 The Breeze, Winnipeg, MN: Stephen Fearing, *Between Hurricanes* (LowdenProud); David Francey, *So Say We All* (Laker); Beppe Gambetta, *The American Album* (Gadfly); Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Independent); The Milk Carton Kids, *The Ash & Clay* (Anti-); 100 Mile House, *Wait With Me* (Chronograph); Karine Polwart, *Traces* (W2 Music/Borealis); Justin Rutledge, *Valleyheart* (Outside); Frank Solivan & The Dirty Kitchen, *On The Edge* (Compass); The Steep Canyon Rangers, *Tell The Ones I Love* (Rounder)

**New Discoveries:** Beppe Gambetta, The Kruger Brothers, 100 Mile House



**Eric Volmers:** Entertainment writer, *Calgary Herald*; freelancer, *Penguin Eggs*: Joseph Arthur, *The Ballad of Boogie Christ* (Real World); Neko Case, *The Worse Things Get, The Harder I Fight, The Harder I Fight, The More I Love You* (Anti-); Steve Earle, *The Low Highway* (New West); Patty Griffin, *American Kid* (New West); Jim Guthrie, *Takes Time* (Static Clang); Kris Kristofferson, *Feeling Mortal* (KK); Okkervil River, *Silver Gymnasium* (ATO); Daniel Romano, *Come Cry With Me* (Normaltown); Rae Spoon, *My Prairie Home* (Saved By Radio); Richard Thompson, *Electric* (New West)

**New Discoveries:** T. Buckley, The Civil Wars, Snowblink

**Michael (A Man Called) Wrycraft:** Album designer, festival emcee, concert curator: Cary Cooper, *Zuzu's Petals* (Independent); Jaron Freeman-Fox, *The Opposite of Everything* (Independent); Tony McManus, *Mysterious Boundaries* (Independent); Lynn Miles, *Downpour* (Independent); Ruth Moody, *These Wilder Things* (True North); Jory Nash, *Little Pilgrim* (Thin Man); New Country Rehab, *Ghost of Your Charms* (Kelp); Karine Polwart, *Threshold* (Borealis); Karine Polwart, *Traces* (Borealis); Sooz Schlanger, *Soozmusic* (Independent)

**New Discoveries:** AVIVA, Laura Baron, Milk Carton Kids

(Now, go out and sample all this brilliant music –The







## McKhool And The Gang

**Chris McKhool and Sultans of String mix their global instrumentals with gypsy swing. And now their latest release, *Symphony*, features Paddy Moloney's uilleann pipes and Dala's harmonies. Roger Levesque reports from the trenches.**

**H**ow do you keep a global musical fusion fluid? Catch Sultans Of String in live performance.

They can move from an Arabic groove to gypsy jazz, then to something more ethereal, something in a Celtic vein, or maybe the Latin rhythms that have been their staple. The real feat is how they accomplish all this with the sort of smooth transitions, hip solos, and effective pacing that keeps the audience involved.

Even the band's size is fluid.

Just over a decade old, the Toronto group began as a duo with violinist Chris McKhool and guitarist Kevin Laliberte but the Sultans have grown to encompass a bigger sound and range of influences than they ever imagined, usually with five players and occasional guests. Now there are orchestral collaborations, too, onstage and on their latest and fourth recording, *Symphony!*. Whatever the context, they keep an air of spontaneity that makes things exciting.

De facto bandleader McKhool is happy

how the group has grown.

"One of the things I love about this band is how versatile it is and how we can be equally at home in a jazz club or at a folk festival. I loved adding the classical symphonic series to the mix. Even though this is not classical music it's a great way to connect with new audiences and it's exciting for people to hear those rhythms with an orchestra. I think there's real potential for this recording to open up some new avenues for us."

That famous Irish piper, The Chieftains' Paddy Moloney, puts in a cameo on the track *Sable Island*, part of a guest list that includes the voices of Dala (Amanda Walther, Sheila Carabine) and Palestinian oud virtuoso Bassam Bishara. Now the *Symphony!* album has been picked up for distribution in the U.S. by Sony Music's Red division and the band is doing about a dozen dates a year with orchestras.

For McKhool it marks a new height of activity in an unexpected career. The Ottawa-raised musician started violin lessons at seven, joined a youth orchestra at nine and took off into uncharted territory after discovering jazz in high school, but he actually graduated from university with a psychology degree before he fell into making music by accident.

Near the end of his studies at Montre-

al's McGill University in 1990, McKhool was diagnosed with fibromyalgia. As he struggled to control the disease a job at a daycare helped make ends meet. When his boss witnessed his talent for connecting kids to music he wound up doing that full-time (healthy again, he's made four solo albums for young audiences and the Sultans' workshops for young people continue this side career 20 years later).

Along the way he began to explore folk fiddle styles and the musical roots of his paternal Lebanese ancestry. It helped to take lessons in Arabic music from Palestinian-Canadian Bassam Bashira, who plays oud on three of their albums including *Symphony!*.

The violinist was a relative newcomer to the Toronto scene when he met up with Laliberte there in 2002. The guitarist was mid-way through a five-year stint in Jesse Cook's band and his command of rumba-flamenco rhythms inspired McKhool. Before long they had a weekly club gig, a chance to explore the possibilities and shape new compositions.

"When we started as a duo it would have seemed impossible that we would have the opportunities that we have now and I try to stay conscious of keeping that openness, to be open to special guests or styles. To bring in a special guest is also a way for us to learn about a particular style that we're not as familiar with so we can keep growing."

While McKhool and Laliberte are still the



chief writers, the group's organic growth has allowed for arrangements that reflect a democratic contribution from everyone.

Bassist Drew Birston joined in to beef up the duo for outdoor shows and was a regular member when the Sultans made their first CD, *Luna*, in 2007. Adding percussionist Rosendo (Chendy) Leon and second guitarist Eddie Paton brought even more to the sound.

"When Chendy joined the band he did a lot of the arrangements with us so the songs were more fully formed when we went into the studio. He's such a master at all kinds of percussion. Eddie also brought some great ideas to the table. Drew has both a jazz and a pop background, and Kevin is into bebop jazz but he can pick up a Stratocaster and play classic rock solos. We come from different backgrounds and everyone brings these little idiosyncrasies but the influences we bring in are very complimentary."

Sporting some songs that dated back to their earliest jams, the debut *Luna* won critical acclaim and got them their first cross-Canada tour in 2009. But it was the third album, *Yalla Yalla* (2009), that really established their reputation, garnering a Juno nomination and the Canadian Folk Music Award for Instrumental Group of the Year.

New instruments have opened up more options for these strong improvisers. By 2009 McKhool worked his way up to an acoustic-electric six-string violin that expands his range to below the viola. Meanwhile, Laliberte plays a custom carbon-fibre acoustic-electric guitar, using pedal effects and looping technology to create his own underlying guitar patterns.

The silent star of the *Symphony!* sessions has to be arranger Rebecca Pellett. She drew half the tracks from older repertoire mixing in new tunes like the Hungarian folk-influenced *Monti's Revenge*, the Latinized *Palmas Sinfonia*, and Laliberte's *A Place To Call Home*. Best of all, she accomplished that rare task of getting their hand-picked orchestra to swing.

"She can really indicate exactly what she hears in her head and how she wants it to unfold. I wanted the orchestra to be an equal partner in this. One challenge is that we play groove-based music and those can be unfamiliar rhythms for the orchestra. They seem to get that but there's always

a bit of a push and pull. It's different for us because the form is so set. You have to know how long your solo is because the orchestra is always moving on."

McKhool feels there's no reason why the group's stylistic diversity shouldn't continue to expand in the future.

"I've got so many ideas I would like to try. I still love experimenting just as a duo."

## Family Matters

**Richard and Linda Thompson reunite on *Won't Be Long Now*—Linda's deeply wonderful new recording. It's also graced by their children and luminaries of the British traditional folk scene. Colin Irwin works the graveyard shift.**

Linda Thompson is all a fluster. "I've got to do this thing for the BBC, it's at seven o'clock in the morning ... I mean, WHO gets up at seven in the morning?"

Who indeed? It's a fair point, but Linda has already scampered off on ever more surreal directions, talking fast and furiously about ... well, everything. There are her awards ("Even if it comes from the Queen I don't think I deserve it"); nostalgia ("a fancy name for depression"); grandchildren ("have you heard my grandson Zak

play guitar—he's unbelievable"); Carolina Chocolate Drops ("that girl with them is amazing"); Eliza Carthy ("she's coming to stay so I need to prepare—she's a force of nature, that girl"); Mumford & Sons ("not really my cup of tea"); and, er, graveyards ("I am desperately interested in graveyards"). Indeed, she'd be happy talking about graveyards all night. "I do love a good graveyard; sometimes I go for a walk in my local graveyard and wonder if there's much point in me going home..."

Push her hard and she might even talk about her deeply wonderful new album *Won't Be Long Now*, unanimously acclaimed all over the western hemisphere and which, at the grand old age of 66, appears not only to have rejuvenated her career but introduced her to a whole new audience.

It's a remarkable album for lots of reasons. Not least because nobody—least of all Linda herself—expected her to make it. Starting out among the second wave of revival singers singing traditional songs in British folk clubs along with the likes of her great friend Sandy Denny, she went on to marry Richard Thompson—fresh out of Fairport Convention—creating a renowned musical partnership that's still revered today. Richard provided the ammunition and, with a voice that cut to the very heart, Linda knocked us dead with them. Richard and Linda's mid-1970s albums *I Want To*



Linda Thompson





BLACK HEN MUSIC



PRESENTS

# STEVE DAWSON

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See *The Bright Lights Tonight*, *Hokey Poky*, and *Pour Down Like Silver* are rightly regarded as classics and their sixth and final album together, *Shoot Out The Lights* in 1982—partly recorded when Linda was pregnant when their relationship was fast descending into meltdown—still wields the sort of raging impact conjured only by raw emotional tension.

Traumatized by the collapse of their marriage, Linda contracted dysphonia, a disorder of the vocal chords that has plagued her ever since, repeatedly disrupting her solo career with the result that she's made just four solo albums, *One Clear Moment* (1985), *Fashionably Late* (2002), *Versatile Heart* (2007) and *Won't Be Long Now*. Live performances in that time have also been as rare as hen's teeth, which explains to some degree the excitement generated by every sighting; yet the power of *Won't Be Long Now* far transcends rarity value.

Cheery listening it's not. "I've always been drawn to sad songs," she laughs. "Growing up in Scotland I heard a lot of them. Most people hate bagpipes but I love them. And I love melancholy melodies. My son Teddy says that I even make *Happy Birthday* sound sad. But don't worry, the songs aren't about me. I'm fine, thanks."

For all its bruised fragility, Linda's voice is remarkably affecting, even more so for the sparseness of the production and a folkie approach lent unusual intimacy by the inclusion of her son Teddy, daughters Kami and Muna, grandson Zak Hobbs and, most thrillingly for romantics, ex-husband Richard's mesmerizingly decorating the stark opening track *Love's For Babies and Fools*.

They've had their differences but her admiration for Richard both as songwriter and musician has never wavered and these days they are on good terms.

"I wrote the song very quickly ... it's about ... I don't know really, I suppose it's a cynical song because it's written from an old person's point of view. Richard said he thought it was a great song and would love to play on it, which was lovely."

The familial feel is underlined by some of her oldest British folkie mates on the album—John Kirkpatrick, Dave Swarbrick, Martin and Eliza Carthy among them—with one song, *Mr. Tams*, celebrating the partying credentials of another of the hardy

overlords of U.K. folk song, John Tams ("I don't know if he's heard it yet—he's probably coming after me with a hatchet.")

She is gratified, humbled and a little embarrassed by all the praise being heaped on the new album.

"I really didn't think I'd make another record but I had some songs and somehow it gets done and I'm really thrilled people have been so kind about it. It wasn't deliberately folkie but I wanted it to be more acoustic and the voice managed to hold up. Am I happy with it? Well ... yes ... there's always things you think you could do better but I'm happy."

She even sings one track—the harrowing wife-battering song *Blue Bleezin Blind Drunk* made famous by Belle Stewart—unaccompanied. "It is demanding but I like singing unaccompanied. In some ways as you get older and your hearing is a bit off, it's nice not to have any instrumentation around you. I used to do a lot of unaccompanied singing when I was young and then didn't do it for over 30 years."

The biggest revelation is her songwriting. She long avoided it, believing that anything she'd come up with would shrivel and die alongside anything served up by Richard. The chronic dysphonia didn't help either but, with the assistance of Teddy Thompson, Ron Sexsmith and Anna McGarrigle (a cracking cover of *As Fast As My Feet*) there are some real gems on *Won't Be Long Now*. The one getting most play is a character-

istically dark song of love and loss, *Never The Bride*.

"That's just a traddie type song Teddy and I wrote about a girl who made her way to sea. I have these folkie themes running through my head and they suddenly just seem to pop out. Same with Teddy. He sometimes gives me a tune and I say, 'Good God, that sounds like a Scottish tune from 400 years ago'. I give him a bit of a tune and he comes back with some words or the other way around and then we have a song. It's just something within us."

"I've just written a song with my grandson Zak which I'm very fond of. He's unbelievable. Such a nifty little guitar player and he's so good to have around. He's 18 years old! He shouldn't like folk music but he does. He's just left school and he wants to be in a band. I keep saying to him, 'Why aren't you running around wearing a baseball cap backwards and have trousers hanging off? You might make some money'..."

The ongoing dysphonia means we're unlikely to see her singing onstage any time soon. "I'd love to be able to jump up onstage and sing. I do miss it but I don't think it's going to happen. I'm supposed to be doing these speaking tours answering questions but even my speaking voice has been getting worse and worse. I'll have to answer questions on my iPad..."

And, dare we ask, can we hope for another album in the future?

"Oh, don't ask me that. Who knows?"



Richard and Linda Thompson





## Horseplay

**Joël Fafard and Joel Schwartz trace a direct line from Big Bill Broonzy to Bruce Cockburn on their first, finely crafted collaboration, *Borrowed Horses*. Jason Schneider guides us through their tour with noted sculptor, Joe Fafard, Joël's dad.**

Musical partnerships have been forged under every conceivable circumstance. But the common thread to all is an immediate, unspoken acknowledgment between the two parties that the connection was seemingly inevitable.

That was the case when Joël Fafard and Joel Schwartz first played together, and the seeds planted during that initial jam session have come to fruition on their debut album as collaborators, *Borrowed Horses*.

Its 12 tracks span a wide range of blues, folk, and country standards, including *Trouble In Mind*, *John Hardy*, and *Long Black Veil*, interspersed with some finely crafted instrumentals, along with a surprisingly fitting rendition of Bruce Springsteen's *State Trooper*. What holds the material together is Fafard and Schwartz's bond as guitarists, with the former's forceful acoustic finger-picking complemented by the latter's more atmospheric electric overtones.

While Fafard has consistently been releasing acclaimed albums in this similar vein every couple of years since 1999—2008's all-instrumental *Three Hens Escape Oblivion* earned a Juno nomination—he says that when he met Schwartz during a workshop at the 2011 Discovery Coast Festival in Bella Coola, BC, they both knew there was chemistry brewing between them. “We just found ourselves playing off each other, and kind of sounding like we do now, or at least a premonition of what that was going to be,” Fafard says.

“I invited [Schwartz] up to do my main-stage set that night without rehearsal or anything, and that went really great. So, the next step was doing a tour, and we did one and had a wonderful time. After that we were pretty sure we wanted to get busy on this, so we did a long tour of Western Canada, and at the end of it we made the record.”

While the Toronto-based Schwartz is no stranger to collaboration, having lent his talents to many notable names such as Great Lake Swimmers and Royal Wood, he admits that performing with Fafard has allowed him a certain amount of freedom he hasn't experienced in quite the same way with other artists. “Joël's playing completely stands on its own; he's got an orchestra in his fingers,” Schwartz says.

“Where I fit in is to take the mood of the songs in different directions than might

be expected. In doing that, I think there's a reciprocal effect where that brings stuff out of him, where he has to make some new musical decisions. Sometimes we'll be playing and something will happen to cause us to look at each other as if to ask which one of us just did that. At that point, we're one unit, and trying to achieve that on a consistent basis has been the goal from Day 1.”

Fafard agrees that what Schwartz adds to the overall sound is comparable to how a painter might incorporate a new range of colours and textures. In Fafard's personal assessment of his own approach to roots music, he traces a simple, direct line from the original artists such as Big Bill Broonzy through to contemporary masters such as Bruce Cockburn. Bringing Schwartz into the mix, he believes, has added a new ethereal quality to his style that was never there before.

“He's like a country gentleman, much like the Gretsch guitar he plays,” Fafard says. “We just don't step on each other's toes. I'm a busy guitar player for the most part, and I've learned to be a lot less busy playing with him. I guess looking at it from opposites ends of the spectrum, I'm doing the bass parts and he's doing the atmospheric stuff, and the way we each approach melodies kind of allows us to meet in the middle, which is where things really get interesting.”



The process of discovery extended to the choice to cover *State Trooper* as well. It was a song that Fafard almost painfully admits he wasn't familiar with until recently. "I was sitting at a campfire a couple of years ago and a friend of mine played it. As far as I knew, he wrote the song. I got him to teach it to me, and only after that did I hear Springsteen's version on *Nebraska*. But with it being such a dark, moody tune, it had all of the elements that Joel and I really like to work with."

Perhaps the most prominent quality that song, and all of *Borrowed Horses*, exemplifies is how effectively the duo uses space. Schwartz says that this project has definitely reinforced the old "less is more" adage within him. "I find that the more space we give the music, the more power it has," he explains. "We're really finding that out with our live performances as well. Sometimes what we're doing is so understated but that's when it seems the crowd connects to it the most and responds the best."

Fafard and Schwartz's current tour has been a special one since they've been joined by Fafard's father, Joe, the beloved sculptor whose work has appeared everywhere in Canada, from the National Gallery to prominent public spaces and postage stamps. After years of trying to figure out how to showcase their talents together, the Fafards earlier this year finally hit on the idea of a tour that could combine a concert and an art show into a single event.

It's been a huge success so far, and Joël has been particularly tickled by how well his father, at 71, has taken to the touring lifestyle. It's hardly surprising that the younger Fafard sees his music in almost visual terms, and having his father get to experience that up close has brought them closer together than ever.

"[Joe] has been enjoying his time as a rock star, it's very different from what he's used to," Joël says. "We've done something different in every venue, just because each room offers something unique in terms of space. They've all worked really well, especially Festival Place in [Sherwood Park, near] Edmonton, which was just fantastic for us. There's been a nice mix of his audience and my audience, too. We've kind of been introducing them to one another, and that's been quite exciting."

## Golden Slumbers

**Jackie Oates has made a rather gorgeous album, *Lullabies*, in Iceland and elsewhere. Yet it's not exactly a disc of comforting lyrics and soothing melodies. Sophie Parkes investigates.**

Jackie Oates is one busy woman. She has recently returned home to Oxford, England, following the second leg of her nationwide tour to promote her January 2013 release, a collection of lullabies. It's surprising that she's found the time to tour, given her teaching commitments—she's the sole music teacher at a local primary school, leading the choirs and orchestras and teaching violin and piano to pupils, and has a wealth of private students, too—but her *Lullabies* tour married her love of music and learning to such a degree that it was something she couldn't wait to do.

"At each gig, we ran a workshop, inviting local parents to come along and learn about lullabies. I found that [the English] don't have lullabies lodged in our brains like the Scottish and Irish do, and so I wanted to teach parents some of the songs I'd found, perhaps even planting them back into their consciousness," she explains.

What Jackie wasn't quite prepared for was the enthusiastic reception.

"It was fantastic. I'd teach the songs directly to the parents while the children would be occupied with puppets or soft play. Then we'd do some action songs, with all of us participating together. But what I liked most was the instant reaction you get from a child when you sing to them in a soft, lulling voice: it's just instant calm."

Her fascination for the lullaby form, and her enjoyment of working with young children, has not been a recent development: lullabies have made their appearance on her previous albums, such as *Lavenders Blue* on her first album and *Hampton Lullaby* on her second. When living in Devon, she worked for the folk development agency Folk South West in delivering music workshops to families in rural areas.

"I just love people, stories about people, and working with people," Jackie says, simply. "As with any folk song, you get a snapshot of the life of the person singing it and with lullabies, it's the same. I think that because I'm at a different phase of my life now, I can better understand the stories of the mothers that come across in lullabies, like how motherhood can be monotonous or lonely. As the collectors didn't visit as many women as they did men, we don't have quite so many songs that let us know about women's lives, but lullabies are important in that respect: you get an understanding of what life is like for the mother whose husband is away at sea, or whatever."



Jackie Oates



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## Tubthumping

"Musically, I think lullabies reconnect listeners with their childhoods, and sometimes, everyone likes to be reminded of that time."

However, in pitching her idea for her collection of lullabies, those around her weren't immediately convinced.

"I suppose they were worried it would be too sweet, too saccharine. But as a great deal of my normal working life is spent teaching children, I was really keen to do it, it just made sense. Thankfully, I've got a really open-minded record company [ECC Records] and a creative producer in Richard Evans, and it was only later that I realized what an odd, brave thing it was to agree to do," she says, gratefully.

As soon as she got the green light, she hit the books, taking full advantage of the great wealth of source material available online courtesy of the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Being careful to track every reference, her project has informed a new lullaby archive to be held at the Society's Vaughan Williams Memorial Library. She hopes to note down her favourites for a dedicated songbook.

But for those listeners anticipating an album of comforting lyrics and soothing melodies, *Lullabies* showcases some unexpected sentiments and stirrings. Much of this is aided by the decision to include Icelandic songs and instrumentation; indeed, part of the album was even recorded on location in Iceland.

"Iceland has a fantastic lullaby tradition and I'm really interested in Scandinavian culture. There's an Icelandic singer, Bára Grímsdóttir, who is really amazing—she's easily in my top five singers of all time—and I wrote to her and she sent me dozens of lullabies with their English translations. We were lucky enough to be able to work together when we went across to Iceland," she says. "My producer also had a connection with a string arranger called Borgar Magnason who has worked with Sigur Rós and he put together some incredible arrangements for us; the added strings gave it that wintry, mystical feel. I think it really captured the ambience of the space we were in: it was winter in Iceland, it was dark all day long, and really cold and windy."

Jackie's brother, Jim Moray, is also

credited on her *Lullabies* album, as he has been on all her previous collections, but this time it is in the form of a song suggestion: *Junk* by Paul McCartney.

"Jim is very inspirational, he's always full of very off-the-wall ideas, and he's very generous with his ideas, too. So he suggested a song for *Lullabies*, but he also made all the short films for the album, recording me in Oxford at five in the morning in the rain, or on a punt when it was absolutely freezing.

"We would love to do a duo album together; it's a blessing we've got so much in common, we're good friends. There's always an element of competitiveness between us, but most of the time we can ignore it," she laughs.

Their mother is also mentioned in the liner notes to the album, as it was from her singing that Jackie learnt the song *Alexander Beetle*. She and Jim grew up in a musical household, where her dad played the melodeon, her mother sang, and both owned an extensive record collection and liked to holiday at folk festivals and visit folk clubs.

"I don't think it was unusual, no," she reflects, "parents have always wanted to share music with their children, and the connection I see between parents and children at the workshops is the same; songs bond families."

But for now, Jackie is not sure where the project will go.

"There are no more *Lullabies* gigs, but I'm still adding to the archive and noting down melodies. I'd like to work on a new album, something completely different. I've been playing in a string quartet covering pop songs, which we did for Festival No.6, and I absolutely loved it. I feel like I'm at a bit of a crossroads with my career—which is very exciting."



Jackie Oates





Trucks Tedeschi Band

## Slip-Sliding Away

**Derek Trucks mastered the slide guitar performing with the Allman Brothers Band. He now fronts the high-flying soul and blues powered 11-piece Tedeschi Trucks Band alongside his wife, Susan. Peter North supplies the superlatives.**

In early November, Derek Trucks had just cleared airport security somewhere in the United States to make his way to a connecting flight that would take him to the Canadian west coast.

The slide guitarist, his singer/guitarist wife, Susan Tedeschi, and band mates would meet up with their touring buses and crew in Vancouver to begin a tour of Canadian theatres that would take them coast to coast over the space of two short weeks. The 11-piece Tedeschi Trucks Band was ready for another mission, one with the purpose of leaving adoring audiences in classy auditoriums and theatres drenched in high-powered soul and blues-basted performances – a sound that has made the band one of the most critically acclaimed of our time.

So just 24 hours before their opening gig at Vancouver's Vogue Theatre, Trucks was on the phone in an airport departure lounge talking about the group's latest and third recording, *Made Up Mind*, and how

much musical and geographical terrain the Tedeschi Trucks Band has covered in three short years.

As the tour rolled towards the final Canadian stop in Halifax at the Cunard Centre, the revue was either running from old man winter or smack into it. Would the Canadian Shield provide inspiration for new tunes? We'll have to wait and see but Trucks never has to look any farther than over his shoulder to see how inspired this ensemble of marvellously talented musicians can be on any given night.

"I think when you put an ensemble of this size together, with so many musical personalities, there's no way to know how it is going to unfold. You have to trust the process and look at the long view but it has been amazing so far," says Trucks, who married Tedeschi in 2001. While the two contributed to each other's solo recordings, started a family, and appeared onstage with each other from time to time, the decision to fuse the two careers didn't take hold until 2010.

"This band really started fast. I had my first group when I was 14 or 15 and it was a slow grind, learning as you go," added Trucks, whose idea of a slow grind may be a little different than most, as by his seventeenth summer he was being recognized internationally as one of the greatest

slide guitarists to have ever come down the pike. By his twentieth birthday he had also become an official member of the Allman Brothers Band of which his uncle, drummer Butch Trucks, was a founding member. Apparently the term "slow grind" is relative to one's personal situation.

It wasn't long after joining the Allman Brothers that he started courting Tedeschi, who is eight years his senior. She initially thought the age difference would be a roadblock to taking their relationship beyond friendship and the artistic bond they had forged.

Two kids and three albums later, it's a relationship that has blossomed on all fronts. Watching the two connect on stage confirms that these two gifted co-pilots work together wonderfully as they seamlessly fly from his instrumental to her vocal passages, allowing them to share the spotlight as a performance unfolds.

*Made Up Mind*, the 2013 followup to the 2012 two-disc live set *Everybody's Talkin'*, boasts a fiery horn section, passionate and at times searing instrumental interplay with consistently tasty arrangements. Maybe the most notable aspect of the evolution of the band in terms of its discography is that Tedeschi's vocals sound better and better with every outing.

Trucks echoes Tedeschi's take on that part of the equation, that she offered up just after the release of the *Revelator* album in 2011.

"I think early on, in her solo career, Susan was a victim of the way records can be made. You can spend days and days getting the tracks done and then you are



running out of studio time and budget. So it becomes a situation where you get the singer in the booth and get the vocals done as quickly as possible. She was forced to sing an entire record's worth of material in a day or two.

"We have a studio in our backyard and can record whenever we want and there's an emotional consistency that isn't in place when you are up against the clock. What happens in the rushed situation is that you know what will work and you get by without getting the great performance. On the material we've recorded we've been able to pay attention to the best things, and get to the focal point of a tune," feels the guitarist who once again enlisted Rosanne Cash's hubby, John Leventhal, Gary Louris of Jayhawks fame, and his friend and onetime Eric Clapton bandmate Doyle Bramhall II to contribute to the songwriting process.

Standout songs on *Made Up Mind* are abundant and include the title track, the stunningly sublime *It's So Heavy*, which is built around a powerfully understated and

soulful vocal from Tedeschi, and *Idle Wind* that was co-written by the husband-and-wife team and Louris.

"Gary had come up with that intro riff and we were off to the races," stated Trucks, with what is a recurring joy-filled laugh, one that acts as a reminder of just how much he loves making music.

"We wrote so many sections and parts for *Idle Wind* that we had to eventually pare it down when we went to record it. We had written it on acoustic guitars and I didn't want to lose that initial feel—it was important to keep that sound," added the guitarist, who didn't strap on the electric and slip on his slide until it was time to take the song home after Tedeschi had sung all the verses.

In a live setting it's not unexpected that the Tedeschi Trucks Band would lay out everything they dig into from *Made Up Mind* with flares of improvisational fireworks. Trucks continues to grow as a guitarist even though he has taken the art of slide guitar playing to new plateaus.

"Sometimes it's the technique I work on but where I find myself wanting to grow the most is with harmonics. I am blessed to work with musicians like our keyboard and flute player, Kofi Burbridge, and drummer Tim Lefevre, who think on four or five different levels at a time. That's the beauty of music, pursuing the idea of doing it at a higher level all the time."

Trucks acknowledges that being on the road with jazz pioneer Herbie Hancock last year was yet another indelible reminder of where the bar and musical creativity is set.

"The way Herbie works and gets excited about the gig and just charges ahead, never resting, is inspiring. You get around guys like that and you realize you have a long way to go, but they are giving you lessons on how to make great music and make it count. Not many are as on point as Herbie Hancock or Willie Nelson."

One suspects, and God willing, that Trucks will be handing down the same kind of one-on-one inspiration when his turn comes down the road.

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## Pipe Up

**Carlos Núñez plays the traditional Galician gaita—the electric guitar of the Middle Ages. He explains to Roger Levesque the fine line between musical technique and sorcery.**

Amidst the most personally satisfying Edmonton Folk Music Festival in recent years, one of the most memorable encounters came with Galicia's star of the pipes, Carlos Núñez.

He has long enjoyed an international reputation as “the Hendrix of the bagpipes”, but after catching Núñez (say noon-yez) and his quartet in two afternoon sessions it was clear that the man is a multi-faceted artist who delivers a complete musical package.

Apart from his mastery of the gaita (Galician bagpipes), flutes, whistles, and recorders, he often turned to face his musicians (including his brother, percussionist Xurxo Núñez), to cue and conduct the spontaneous group dynamic. His expertly paced set featured an incredible take on Ravel's *Bolero* among varied folk sounds, buoyed by the bandleader's undeniable charisma and an infectious energy that had the entire crowd on its feet.

Afterwards, a long line of new fans lined up for his autograph (most of them women, many raving how it was one of the best sets they had ever seen), and you couldn't miss the twinkle in Núñez's eye as he signed away. In an interview afterwards he smiled to admit that there's a fine line between musical technique and sorcery.

“Sometimes with the pipes you have to try and be a magician, maybe to make it seem as if there are two melodies at once. It's part of being an illusionist. And the true magicians, they know from very early times that certain effects or scales put people in a special mood.”

A few minutes into the conversation you realize the man is also an enthusiastic scholar, an encyclopedic musicologist who brings an appreciation for the ancient sonic threads that tie the old world to the Americas in every phrase he plays.

“When you work with traditional music everything becomes part of a connection with the mother music, with something pre-existing. The word composition comes



from *compositio*, to put together little things that already exist. Sometimes you think, ‘I've heard this melody before’, and that's because little bits of it are already part of your imagination.”

He will happily trace the ancient Celtic connections of the gaita up the Atlantic corridor from Galicia, Spain's northwest province, to Scotland and Ireland, and then again from Galicia to Latin America, or pinpoint the differences between gaita and the other bagpipes.

“In the 19th century the Scots developed the gaita into a new instrument, the Scottish Highland pipes, because they wanted a more powerful instrument to work with many pipers at once, one big pipe band. So they lost some of the individual things that the older gaita had, like vibrato, grace notes and the practice of improvisation, the minor scales and chromaticism. They lost some of the musical possibilities but they made a great sound that was very, very powerful. So I think the gaita is more of a soloist's instrument. In a way, the gaita was the electric guitar of the Middle Ages because it was fashionable all over Europe.”

Núñez's own relationship with the gaita started by osmosis, growing up with traditional music in Vigo, the chief Atlantic port city and cultural crossroads on Spain's

northwest coast. After starting lessons at eight he went on to study recorder at Madrid's Royal Conservatory and today he sees folk and classical music as “parallel traditions”.

For decades elements of traditional Galician culture had been suppressed under the regime of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco. Spain became known only for flamenco. Following Franco's death in 1975 Galicia would experience a cultural rebirth and the piper was ideally poised to help re-connect Galician music with the world.

The most fortuitous moment of his early years had to be meeting The Chieftains at a Celtic music fest in Brittany when he was 13. At 18 the Irish group invited him to join in on a soundtrack for the film *Treasure Island* and he wound up gaining a unique apprenticeship, touring with them internationally over several years to become known as “the seventh Chieftain”, learning lessons he would use to launch his own career (he's on a few of their albums including the Grammy-winning *Santiago*).

“The best thing Paddy Moloney suggested to me was, ‘Carlos, why don't you make connections with flamenco and Latin America?’ I have to thank them for that.”

Despite the warnings of others, Núñez became the first person to join the north and



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south traditions of Spanish music.

“People said, ‘You’re playing with flamenco, the devil, the enemy’ but we had things in common. I made albums with the great flamenco masters and I discovered that Galicia has all these Atlantic connections with Celtic music. It was amazing what we put together—Irish and Scottish musicians with flamenco. Unbelievable! And the common root was Galicia.”

From the beginning Núñez had a broad vision. His auspicious 1996 solo debut *Brotherhood Of Stars* featured dozens of guests including The Chieftains, Sinéad O’Connor, and Ry Cooder. It became the first Celtic-oriented album to hit platinum status in Spain.

Since then he has released another dozen albums with soundtracks and concert sets, digging deeper into his ancestral roots and collaborating with the likes of Spain’s medieval music master Jorde Savalle, or sparking new friendships around the globe with artists from varied traditions, pop, and the avant garde.

For an introduction to Núñez there’s no better place to start than *Discover* (2012), the two-disc anthology of previous work that marked his signing to Sony Masterworks. It’s staggering breadth includes some of his earliest work with The Chieftains, meetings with roots stars like The Waterboys’ Mike Scott, Jackson Browne and Sharon Shannon, and several members of Buena Vista Social Club—Carlinhos Brown, Hector Zazou, Ryuichi Sakamoto, and Laurie Anderson, among others.

Núñez says he likes to have several projects going at the same time before recording.

“You have tomatoes, oranges, and grapes and nature decides which one ripens first.”

Part of his genius comes in his ability to make music with ancient origins feel timeless and to tie more contemporary explorations to the past, reminding us that certain musical elements like improvisation are as old as civilization.

He seemed particularly happy in his first tour of Canadian festivals.

“It has been so joyful. It has made me remember something that I first realized years ago when I played with The Chieftains, that traditional music is here for everyone. It does not separate people into young or old. We get the feeling this new generation is ready.”



## Raising the Bar

**Ry Cooder suggested some of the gospel songs the High Bar Gang cover on their impressive debut recording. This colourful collection of veteran Canadian folk and rock artists includes Barney Bentall and Shari Ulrich. Mike Sadava takes note.**

Somewhere up in heaven Bill Monroe is wearing a huge smile.

Looking down on the west coast of Canada, he can see a big group of musicians, coming from decades of playing rock and folk music, learning bluegrass and playing it with the reverence he’d say it deserves.

The seven-member High Bar Gang is no Mumford & Sons, or pop music with a bit of banjo. No, this is pure bluegrass, the way Bill meant it to be played, and their first disc, *Lost and Undone: A Gospel Bluegrass Companion*, is just that: totally gospel bluegrass.

The result is surprisingly genuine, given the personnel, who are all latecomers to the genre. The band is the brainchild of Colin Nairne, who cut his musical teeth in the ’80s playing guitar with arena rockers Barney Bentall and the Legendary Hearts.

Although he hadn’t played it, Nairne was exposed to the music of Monroe and Ralph Stanley in the bus during those endless road trips. A few years ago he went down to Hardly, Strictly Bluegrass in San Francisco and was dazzled by Del McCoury and Ralph Stanley. “I saw the power of this seemingly simple music that can blow people off their feet.” He felt a strong urge to put together a bluegrass band.

One of his first calls was to Bentall, his old pal and boss who has headed in a more rootsy/country direction, including his annual tour with Grand Cariboo Opry, a stellar country music revue that features Bentall’s friends, such as Ridley Bent, as well as his son, Dustin.

“We were all pretty game from the first approach,” says Bentall. “Colin must be a pretty good pitch man.”

Nairne rounded up other musical friends, including multi-instrumentalist Eric Reed and bassist Rob Becker, but the focus was to be on vocals. There’s nothing like bluegrass harmonies, and Nairne recruited three of the finest West Coast female voices to that effect, including Shari Ulrich of Hometown Band and Pied Pumkin fame, as well as singers Angela Harris and Wendy Bird.



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Bentall says he has had to climb a steep learning curve to master bluegrass harmonies, coming from a rock'n'roll perspective on harmonies. He often finds himself holding down the bass vocal, anchoring the three female voices, and it's all new to him.

"What I've gotten out of this band is that at this point of my life I'm still learning things. ... One aspect that continues to hit me in a significant way is that it isn't an easy music to play: to play it fast, with sincerity and with the respect it deserves. It's been such an education."

Ulrich also had never had much to do with bluegrass, despite her ability on the fiddle, and felt a twinge of anxiety when Nairne called her. She didn't have the bluegrass vocabulary in her playing but she has managed to adapt her style to the genre, and she's totally enthralled with singing three and four-part harmony.

"I'm just a sucker for great three-part harmony," Ulrich says. "UHF (a trio with Bill Henderson and Roy Forbes) is a lot about that. There's something about the human voice—when you're nailing it it goes right to the core."

She also enjoys the lower pressure of not being in her accustomed position of being in control and making all the decisions. "I just surrender to whatever Colin wants to do and whatever he wants to play."

One of the earliest band decisions was not to write their own songs but to explore the vast bluegrass repertoire. "There are a lot of songwriters in the band but we decided that since there's a wealth of material out there, let's do the old material. Anyway, they all have other vehicles

for their own songs," Nairne says, adding that both Bentall and Ulrich have new albums about to be released.

"There are seven people with careers and egos, and it's amazing to see everyone focus on just making a song sound great."

They decided the first recording would concentrate on the bluegrass sub-genre of gospel, and they got guidance from none other than Ry Cooder. Nairne has worked with Cooder for 10 years in his day job with Macklam Feldman Artist Management, and Cooder was supportive of the idea from the start. "He'd send me cryptic emails with a song title, and I thought, 'I have to find it'. ... He's been encouraging us just to sing the songs—don't try to go in a grandiose direction of making them your own. You're honouring a tradition, continuing a chain."

The *Companion* is a terrific reminder of how many great gospel bluegrass songs are out there, and you don't have to be a believer. A few, such as *I Saw the Light*, are familiar to many, but most are obscure outside bluegrass circles, with songs such as *Daniel Prayed* and Ralph Stanley's *Rank Strangers*, possibly the spookiest gospel tune ever written.

They also continue the bluegrass tradition of all the vocalists gathering around one microphone, with a second mic for solos. It's as close to sitting in the kitchen as you can get onstage, and requires a good sound man and some very close listening.

Nairne recalls a couple of late summer outdoor concerts opening for Blue Rodeo where the audience was very



attentive to the subtle, more quiet arrangements than they were used to. "It's nice to play a show like that and afterwards know my ears aren't ringing."

It's all worked out well for the High Bar Gang, which is named after an area of the Cariboo near Bentall's cattle ranch. They were planning on doing the independent thing, putting out their own disc and selling it from the stage, but an exec at True North Records heard it and signed a deal with the band. Most of their shows have been sold out, and they're even getting air play in Europe.

Scheduling, is probably the most difficult factor for a band with seven members. But everyone is pencilling in more time for the High Bar Gang, which will likely include recording another album next summer at Bentall's century-old ranch house.

The next disc will be cheatin' and hurtin' bluegrass songs, and Lord knows there are plenty of those to choose from. And even if the subject matter isn't quite as heavenly, there's no doubt that Bill will still be grinnin'.

## Past Perfect

**Gordon Quinton's reputation places him among the finest acoustic guitarists in Newfoundland, if not the whole country. His various inspirations range from Joni Mitchell to Vincent Van Gogh. Jean Hewson lends an ear.**

In the 1950s, Newfoundland and Labrador was a newly minted Canadian province, emerging from the aftermath of both Confederation with Canada, and the Second World War. The fishery and other resource-based industries were still thriving but the traditional life of outport Newfoundland was being altered by modern influences. The inhabitants of small, isolated communities were resettled to larger towns with better services. Young people opted to come to St. John's to go to university and trades college instead of fishing with their families. Television, radio and the many American bases that had sprung up during the war introduced a legion of musical styles to the populace, and accordion players and traditional singers had to make way for country pickers and



Gordon Quinton

rock and rollers.

During that time of social flux, guitarist Gordon Quinton was born in the central Newfoundland town of Grand Falls-Windsor. His guitar style beautifully captures the mixed bag of cultural influences that transformed post-confederation Newfoundland. The arrangements on his latest CD, *A Guitar's Story*, include lovely settings of traditional melodies, blistering renditions of country favourites, and impressionistic, original pieces in alternate tunings. It represents the history of a self-taught musician whose passions encompass the old, the new, and the cutting edge.

"When I was 12, my older brother Doug had a friend by the name of Roy King from Windsor. Roy was in the army and he travelled a lot. Once, he came home with a guitar, which he loaned to my brother. When they went out I would take it and practice what I saw them doing. I learned D, G and A7. It was a Gibson archtop. It was really easy to play, with a beautiful tone. I thought all guitars were like that till I got a little older," laughs Quinton, reminiscing about the challenges of learning to play an instrument without formal instruction.

His grandmother was a fine accordion player and singer, and through her he came to love traditional music. Radio and television brought different musical genres into his life.

"On the radio we would hear a lot of

country music. We also had a TV station in Grand Falls in the early '60s called CJCJN. Every Saturday evening they would feature a local band called the Exploits Valley Boys. We didn't have a TV but our neighbours left their window open in the summertime, so I could look in and see their TV and hear the people playing. Howard Bailey, one of the guys on the show, would do a solo on the guitar like *Steel Guitar Rag* or *Guitar Boogie Breakdown*. I couldn't believe it. That's when I started to flatpick the guitar."

After high school, Quinton moved to St. John's. The coffee house scene was in full swing and before long he became the guitarist of choice for many local acts. He played on CBC's *All Around the Circle* and toured with everyone from Joan Morrissey and Dick Nolan to Rufus Guinchard.

"Back then I was playing clubs seven nights a week. I really got tired of playing every night, it was becoming a bit of a grind. I would go on the road for seven or eight weeks, then come back home to pay the rent and go off again. I started to lose interest in music, I didn't enjoy playing anymore.

"One day at a friend's I heard a piece called *Rockport Sunday* by Tom Rush. It sounded really different, I couldn't figure out what the guy was doing. The guitar sounded so beautiful, like a harp. A few weeks later someone told me it was in an



open C tuning. I also heard Joni Mitchell and Bruce Cockburn who were using tunings. Bruce did a song called *Foxglove* which I loved. Duane Allman had this piece called *Little Martha*, and I thought, 'Gee, I'd love to do something like that!'. Allman was a rock musician but this particular piece was on an acoustic in an open E tuning. Even now, all these years later when I hear it, I get shivers up my spine, it's so joyful and expressive."

The search for a deeper musical experience led Quinton to the recording studio. In the '80s he released his first three solo albums: *Guitar Songs*, *Woodnight Moon*, and *Wildwood Flower*. These recordings were largely collections of his arrangements of traditional and folk tunes. The title track of *Woodnight Moon* was an original piece, and was well received by his friends and fans. With their encouragement, he locked himself away for six months and created the music for his first recording of original music, *Sea Winds*, released in 1989.

"I like to interpret vision and sound and

translate those things to the guitar. Myself and my wife, Patti, loved to walk on the waterfront and look at the boats. One night we saw a Russian ship, and it was dark and mysterious, so I wrote a piece for it. On my latest CD [*A Guitar's Story*] I composed a piece called a *Night of Shimmering Stars*. I was out at Cape St. Mary's and there were a billion stars out that night, and I was also reading a book about Vincent Van Gogh that a friend had given to me, so the tune was inspired by those two things. I enjoy the process of taking different themes and creating pieces for them."

Over the course of his 40-year career, Quinton has released nine solo albums and a record with Ward Six, which is now a collector's item. He has also played on innumerable local albums and CDs. Many of Newfoundland's best-known musicians and guitarists, including Sandy Morris, Duane Andrews, Glen Collins, Chris LeDrew, and Bob Sutherby, consider him a musical inspiration and an icon. Dave Panting, instrumentalist and songwriter with

Rawlins Cross, says, "I was a bit in awe of him when I was young. Even then he had the reputation of being Newfoundland's top acoustic guitarist. To me, Gordon's playing has a vibe all its own; a gentle and contemplative mix of country, jazz, classical, and folk with Newfoundland trad thrown in there. He set the bar for me in those days and he still does."

These days, when he performs he generally stays close to home, but in a place where folk heroes are discovered in their 70s, and embark on international tours well into their 80s, it is possible that the busiest years of his career still lie ahead. Quinton laughs at that suggestion, and says that he still loves to play and learn new things, and that he is far from done.

"I've been playing the guitar for so long, but I always feel like a beginner. I love the look of it, the feel of it. It's not just for my own gratification. I like to move people with music. That's what it's all about, the shared joy. I never get tired of it, there's always something new to discover."





# Gospel Truths

The Sojourners evolved from a recording session with actor and bluesman Jim Byrnes. Their old-school, hardcore gospel caught the producer's ear. Three sterling albums later, Alan Kellogg catches up with their Marcus Mosely.

**T**his Train, you know, the one "bound for glory," a gospel standard for more than 80 years—from Sister Rosetta Tharpe to Mumford & Sons—is one of the standouts on the fine new Sojourners CD, *Sing and Never Get Tired*.

Clearly the original intent of the traditional praise song involved an inspirational trip of celestial proportions. But if not exactly heaven-bound (depending on your view of the Lower Mainland), the story of Sojourner Marcus Mosely's real-life journey from the cotton fields of the Texas panhandle prairielands to Vancouver is a story of epic proportions by any stretch.

On a clear, blue-sky North Shore morning, Mosely is recalling his early, formative years in and around the hamlet of Ralls, TX. The small family farm worked in the '50s by his mother, Michelle, and step-dad grew corn, cattle, horses, and pigs. To make ends meet, mother and son also hired out to pick cotton. "I was more of a nuisance than a help," he offers over the line with a laugh. "But there wasn't exactly any daycare around then, and when I got tired and whiny, my mother would stuff some cotton into a canvas sack so I could sleep." Growing up black in a very white—not yet Hispanic—town left other early memories, too, also alluded to in the new CD, which carries a liner quote from the great civil rights pioneer (and current congressman) John Lewis. To wit: "If not us then who? If not, then when."

"I can remember driving into town from the farm. In the parking lot of the brick Catholic church, there were signs that read: 'Whites Only.' I mean, those signs hung on the side of the church itself..."

Marcus, an only child, had asthma, and to lessen his symptoms and in search of better economic and political opportunities, the family moved west to California's Bay Area. Childhood and adolescence in San



The Sojourners, l to r: Will Sanders, Khari McClelland, Marcus Mosely

José proved to be a more salubrious base, to understate it. There was flag football, school glee club, a cheap chord organ, encouragement from a key teacher and a multitude of musical influences, from the burgeoning, cross-pollinated San Francisco rock scene of the '60s to Michelle's love of gospel heard in her Southern Baptist congregation.

Marcus found himself in the midst of the social upheaval and counter-culture of the day, from the King and Kennedy assassinations to the Black Panther party, various cults, nearby Haight-Ashbury and beyond. He chose the route of the so-called Jesus Movement, a controversial association that took him literally around the world as a missionary for many years. "I travelled to Zimbabwe, Argentina, Vietnam, all over. We smuggled bibles into Eastern Europe, got involved in drug rehab."

It was at the Youth With A Mission station on the big island of Hawaii where he met one of Pat and Shirley Boone's daughters who noticed Marcus's budding singing abilities. Moving to L.A. and attending the same Pentecostal Foursquare Church (begun by famed, tragic evangelist Aimee Semple MacPherson) as the Boones, talk of a backup vocalist job on a tour gave the somewhat adrift Mosely, working in the warehouse of Sparrow Records, hope for a time. While that dangled gig didn't work out, it does provide Marcus with a terrific

anecdote.

After many failed attempts to nail down Pat, "I got dressed up and took the bus to the Boone house in Beverly Hills after an invitation. The big iron gates opened and there I was, talking with the man himself. We chatted a bit and I was ushered into a room with chairs set up. I expected it was some sort of audition. In fact, it turned out to be an Amway meeting! So much for that..."

A three-year stint on a scholarship to tony Christian Pepperdine University's psych department in Malibu followed, but it all became too much. Mosely crashed, left school, drifted into drugs and even became homeless for a time. An invitation and bus ticket from old friends to spend the holidays at their home in Richmond, BC, changed everything.

"That was in '85, the year before Expo. They had a basement suite and told me I could stay as long as I wanted to heal. That turned my life around."

On a visitor's visa and unable to work, he began singing in Vancouver venues like the old Austin Hotel. Word spread, and in time, he landed a role in the Arts Club's legendary run of the musical *Ain't Misbehavin'*, which led to the LiveEnt road company of *Showboat*.

There aren't many in the roots scene with grounding in musical theatre but Marcus credits it as an important development in



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## Tubthumping

his career. "I was working with seasoned vets and they taught me the ins and outs. You know, how to present yourself, the idea that the show goes on regardless. The whole deal. It was an invaluable education, and also introduced and integrated me into Vancouver.

The Sojourners owes its genesis (and name) to blues luminary Jim Byrnes, who recruited Mosely, Will Sanders and Ron Small (lately replaced by Khari McClelland) to add some authentic gospel vocals to his 2006 *House of Refuge* album and tour. By 2007, sterling roots producer Steve Dawson had the trio in the studio to cut its debut CD *Hold On*, "about showcasing old school, hardcore Gospel".

The band was in business, earning kudos throughout the continent and, eventually, abroad. *The Sojourners* in 2010, again with Dawson at the production helm, continued the forward progress, picking up a Juno nomination and Western Canadian Music Award, not to mention a succession of festival and concert dates. Along the way, Mosely took up Canadian citizenship as The Sojourners performed *O Canada* at the July 1 festivities on Parliament Hill.

Marcus pronounces the new 12-song CD set—reflecting a social justice theme—"an incredible a collaboration between the two original Sojourners, new member McClelland and producer Paul Pigat. "Khari, an incredibly quick study, is a wonderful addition, giving us a different quality, a different texture. He's younger and from Detroit, not the south, and not raised in the church, but in liberation, afro-centric theology, growing up with hip-hop.

For that matter, Mosely and the band—as tight a vocal trio as you can imagine—have always been adamant that The Sojourners have never been about evangelism and remain steadfastly secular-friendly. For his part, Marcus, a gay man whose spiritual centre is "my inner voice, my sense of God", says the band's music is simply "open to anyone who loves music".

The songs of *Sing and Never Get Tired*—a thoroughly solid, straight ahead effort with a lovely, Hammond B3 organ bed—stretch from traditional gospel tunes arranged by the trio to the likes of Dylan, Steven Stills, and Woody Guthrie.

"I am a child of the '60s and you sense that feeling coming back with this generation again. This is a very clear statement about the here and now, about rights—civil rights, gay rights, women's rights, immigrant rights. We feel this in our bloodstream and want to be part of those pledged to re-infuse those human values...."



**The Sojourners**



# Wild Horses

Steve Poltz's musical versatility ranges from co-writing an international hit to scaling the barriers as a spit-drenched punk. Pat Langston highlights Poltz's latest project—the deeply moving soundtrack for the documentary *Running Wild: The Life of Dayton O. Hyde*.

“I would have made a good cowboy,” says musician Steve Poltz. “I’ve always been drawn to the Prairies, the open spaces.”

The cowboy life has never actually happened for the Halifax-born southern California resident, whose musical resume ranges from fronting the 1990s punk-folk band The Rugburns and co-writing with Jewel her hit ballad *You Were Meant for Me* to releasing *Answering Machine*, an album of short, outgoing musical messages from his answering machine.

But Poltz did get the chance to live the cowboy life vicariously by writing the rootsy soundtrack for Suzanne Mitchell's recently released documentary *Running Wild: The Life of Dayton O. Hyde*.

Both the soundtrack and the film are eminently worth your while.

Image and music together capture the restless life of Michigan-born Hyde, whose career, including rancher, environmentalist (five awards), rodeo clown, writer (17 books) and photographer, is as peripatetic as Poltz's musical life. The documentary's anchor, however, is Hyde's establishment of the 12,000-acre Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary in South Dakota. Battling everyone from neighbours to Washington bureaucrats, he opened the reserve after discovering wild horses rounded up by the state and crammed, half-starving, into pens for sale or slaughter.

“People were telling me it couldn't be done,” says Hyde about creating the sanctuary in the late 1980s. “That's the wrong thing to say to a cowboy.”

Poltz's instrumentals (he's a fine finger-style guitarist) and vocals are sprinkled through the film. Some are short—at less than two minutes, the instrumental *Alfred Noyes* draws on Hyde's friendship with the British poet best-known for pieces like



Steve Poltz

*The Highwayman*—while others like the rattling, clanging vocal *Dirt Cowboy* are longer.

“I think the simplicity of the guitar and Steve's compositions truly work so beautifully against the footage,” says Mitchell in an email. “The folk guitar set against a cowboy story and the Western landscape is perfection.”

She and Poltz had earlier collaborated on an Internet project for which he created original music.

For the Hyde film, says Poltz, “I'd send them songs and they'd shoot them down or accept them.” Feeling he could do better work if he, the film and Mitchell were together, he eventually suggested they all meet in Austin, TX. “I had so much fun writing with that big screen and the film playing. I'd say, ‘How's this?’ They'd say, ‘Make it happier, speed it up.’ ‘Oh, OK.’”

He also spent a couple of days with Hyde at the sanctuary.

Rather than being the redneck rancher that Poltz feared he might be, Hyde was “funny and sharp. You realize how deep, how spiritual he is. He was a little standoffish at first, maybe because there were still so many film people around. I felt a bit like an interloper, but he warmed up pretty fast.”

Poltz also learned how rich Hyde's life has been. While he endured the horrors of

the Second World War, for example, horrors that Poltz conveys in *WWII*, Hyde also went bowling during that time with World Heavyweight Champion Joe Louis.

Poltz and Hyde—the former is now in his early 50s, the latter in his late 80s—have since become friends, with the younger man recently squiring the wheelchair-riding, cowboy hat-wearing older man around New York City. “It was a blast,” reports Poltz.

But it's the open spaces and wildlife that most accord with Hyde's temperament.

“I'm probably more concerned with animals and birds and nature than I am with the human species,” he says at one point in the film.

Elsewhere he says that he and horses have had a bond since he was a teenager, when he left home to work on his uncle's cattle ranch in Oregon. “It makes my day when I can talk to a horse.”

The soundtrack includes a short cut called *Talking to Horses*, and Poltz more than once witnessed Hyde's connection with nature.

“Animals just love this guy—it's insane,” says Poltz. “He has this weird, unspoken energy. One day there were 30 wild mustangs thundering by us, the ground was shaking. They just stopped and came right up to him, their nostrils flaring. They wouldn't come near me.”





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- Dave Bidini



SIX SHOOTER RECORDS

## Tubthumping

Hyde's relationship with animals is most eloquently captured in the reflective track *Song for Hawk*. "*Strolling 'cross the pastures and beyond / One old cowboy sings his song*", begins the tune and later continues, "*Wild horses in the full moon tides / What a lovely ride / For a hawk that glides / What a lovely ride*".

Poltz says Hyde's nickname has always been Hawk, perhaps because one of those birds numbered among the creatures he's befriended over the course of his life. "He loves the song," says Poltz. "He told me he wants me to play it for him whenever he goes in anywhere."

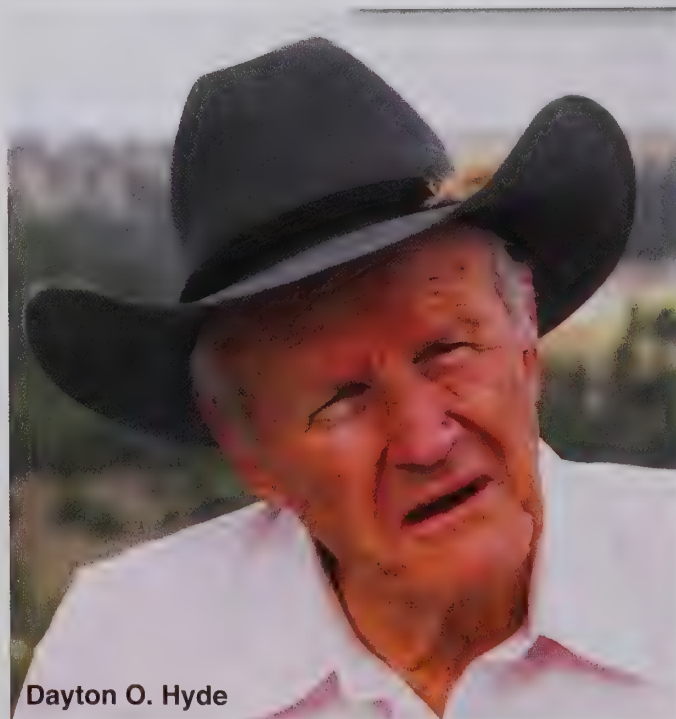
While the documentary is inspirational, it's "not a hagiography," says Poltz. "Dayton goes to the beat of his own drum"—exactly what you'd expect of a guy whose job skills include bullfighting (he fought his last one at 65) and whose penchant for picking himself up and carrying on despite all odds is captured in the jaunty soundtrack tune *I Pray It Never Comes to This*.

Beautifully filmed with scenes of galloping horses and misty lakes, the documentary was praised in both the *New York Times* and the *Village Voice*. Poltz's soundtrack, alas, snared not a mention.

He seems unfazed by that. "I want to be the kind of person who's happy for my friends. When I was in Jewel's band, I wanted her to stand out."

Besides, Poltz has never had trouble attracting attention, albeit sometimes unexpected. After he and Jewel wrote *You Were Meant for Me* on a Mexican beach, for example, they were unaccountably snatched by machine gun-toting Mexican Federales and forced to assist in a large marijuana bust. His concerts and interviews can get your antennae waving when they veer abruptly toward the unhinged. And by his own account, he, like Hyde, has spent half his life roaming.

All of which may make Poltz more of a cowboy than he realizes.



Dayton O. Hyde





Gordie MacKeeman & His Rhythm Boys: Gordie second from left

## The Rhythm Method

Gordie MacKeeman and his Rhythm Boys draw from the same oldtime country well as The Punch Brothers and Old Crow Medicine Show. Only, MacKeeman's high-octane fiddling is inspired by prairie legends Al Cherny and King Ganam. Sandy MacDonald reports.

Canvass the legion of young East Coast fiddlers and you'll find most have soaked up the traditions in their musical home, with relatives who squeezed tunes out of fiddles or accordions in the kitchen. One generation handing off the music to the next.

Not Gordie MacKeeman.

"I got into music as a fluke, really," chuckles the lanky fiddler with the chin-tickling muttonchops. "I started off dancing. My older brother started before me and he was just going there to pick up girls."

Barely into grade school, MacKeeman took up the clogging style of step dancing, which was popular round his hometown of New Glasgow, NS, then picked up the fiddle three years later. Though no one in his family played music, his mother was a keen listener and the pair would often troll through local flea markets looking for old

vinyl country records.

While taking fiddle lessons for a couple of years, the young MacKeeman absorbed the rich canon of traditional country, bluegrass, Celtic, and the Down East fiddle styles. It wasn't long before he was playing for an audience and nurturing a love for performing.

Though Pictou County is just an hour drive into the rising sun to Cape Breton, MacKeeman's main fiddle influences came from over the western horizon—Albertan Al Cherny, who starred on *The Tommy Hunter Show* and King Ganam, "Canada's King of the Fiddle", who hailed from Saskatchewan.

"I've always leaned towards the oldtime style," explains MacKeeman, 31. "It's just what I always wanted to play."

These days he fronts the aptly named Gordie MacKeeman and his Rhythm Boys, an acoustic quartet that is making a name for itself for its joyous revisiting of oldtime country music. Now based in Charlottetown, MacKeeman and the band are tearing up their live shows with solid playing, great energy onstage, and an obvious love of rootsy country music.

When he arrived in Charlottetown to attend college 10 years ago, there was a

small but vibrant cool country scene on the go. Catherine MacLellan was fronting the oldtime string band Saddle River and others were digging back into older country, bluegrass, and folk music for inspiration.

It's the same well that Old Crow Medicine Show, the Punch Brothers, the Little Willies, and even Mumford & Sons are drawing from today.

MacKeeman signed on with the Grass Mountain Hobos, an ECMA-winning bluegrass outfit based in Charlottetown. He frequently crossed paths with other players in the small circle. When the bluegrass band had run its course, the fiddler pulled together the lineup for his new band, The Rhythm Boys.

Guitarist Peter Cann and doghouse bassist Thomas Webb came along from The Hobos, and MacKeeman's roommate, Mark Geddes (bass, drums, percussion, mandolin, and banjo), was drafted into the new band. This lineup slid together naturally three years ago and has been building its reputation ever since.

"We all have input in picking tunes. Everyone's taste comes out when we're deciding on tunes to play."

On the band's just-released sophomore album, *Pickin' N Clickin'*, the boys dish up a spirited mix of instrumentals, originals songs, and even a countrified cover of a

[To continue please turn to page 69]





Good For Grapes, l to r:  
Sean MacKeigan, Blair Hansen,  
Daniel McBurnie, Alexa Unwin,  
Graham Gomez, Robert Hardie.

# Grape Expectations

**After two years causing absolute mayhem live, Good For Grapes have released their debut album, *The Man On The Page*—a recording that captures their youthful, roots-rock energy in all its glorious splendour. Roddy Campbell raves.**

**E**xtra! Extra! Read all about it! Harry Potter saves the world from Armageddon and helps launch Vancouver folk band!

As any tabloid editor will tell you, never let the facts get in the way of a good story. But daft as it sounds, Potter's sleight of hand played its part in creating Good For Grapes—the most exhilarating band to come out of Vancouver since Spirit of the West were an acoustic trio in polka dot shirts.

The wizard chap we'll get to soon enough. There are much more important things to talk about. Oh yes indeed, like Good For Grapes' brand spanking new debut album *The Man On The Page*—a disc bristles with enough captivating hooks,

creative flair and raw energy to place them firmly alongside such celebrated hybrid folk luminaries as, well, The Lumineers, The Avett Brothers, Fleet Foxes and their ilk in terms of both commercial and artistic appeal. And if such a thing as a hit single still exists, then *The Man On The Page* has at least a half-a-dozen bona fide contenders. Move over Marcus Mumford. Please!

Good For Grapes consist of Daniel McBurnie (vocals, acoustic guitar, piano), Sean MacKeigan, (accordion), Graham Gomez (electric/slide guitar, vocals), Alexa Unwin (keyboards, vocals), Robert Hardie (bass, vocals), Jesse Brook (trumpet, trombone, flute) and Blair Hansen (drums, vocals). All sing like larks and play their instruments with an ingenuity and urgency that has already reduced Vancouver and Edmonton folk festival audiences to bedlam.

McBurnie, their charismatic frontman, writes the songs, and like Bob Dylan at his most enigmatic, his lyrics don't follow a literal narrative. Rather, McBurnie offers

tantalizing snapshots of his personal and political views for the listener to decipher.

"You write from your own perspective," he says, from his basement bunker somewhere in deepest, darkest Surrey, BC. "And you write from the things that you see. And you can try in a literal sense to understand exactly what you are trying to say. I feel that just makes writing harder. Whereas you can give your interpretations of what you've seen, or what you are trying to say, and people come up with their own interpretations based on what they understand and what they know. I think that is best because you can touch a lot more people that way."

And while it's not exactly obvious on the track *Renminbi Tips*, there is a hint of smouldering anger that underpins McBurnie's opposition to the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines championed by Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. These proposed pipelines are slated to carry gas and bitumen across B.C. and Alberta's pristine wilderness and pose environmental, economic, social, and cultural risks due to the possibility of rupture.

"That song definitely came from a place



of outrage about the issue of the Gateway Pipeline. I mean, all pipelines right now are being protested. I am not a fan of our current Prime Minister. I guess that was the motivation behind that song.”

Largely, though McBurnie’s songs deal with coming of age as an adult and his once fractious relationship with his father—naturally enough, the lad looks barely old enough to shave.

“*I asked the man who left his home / He said he had a heart of stone,*” he sings on the brilliant *Hallelujah Ghost*.

“*Hallelujah Ghost* is very much a conversation between me and my dad, or really anyone and their dad, about leaving home or starting a new life and leaving someone behind. Most of the other songs are kind of inspired by that certain hurt that goes along with that.

“I wrote a lot of the songs on this album from someone else’s perspective, *A Sequel*, for example, it helped burst through restrictions and presumptions. A lot of the songs totally fall under the album name, *The Man On The Page*. You try to be this person you’ve drawn out in front of you. This person might be changing as well. Your aspirations change as much as he does. It’s interesting, the pursuit of *The Man On The Page*.” All right, cue the last verse of the title track:

*Sunday morning, mournful shining/My first day sober in a while/So what if I did drink too much?/I’m not the only one who’s had enough/And if I could stand without a crutch/I’d step away into the dust/But the pain was too much, and I was dying/But on my life, I won’t stop trying/I’ll be the one who’s on the page.*

“I had titled the album before that song actually came and I kind of named the song after the album. We had finished recording and we were at the mixing phase and I said, ‘Oh, we need to add this song. This needs to be the last song on the record’, perfect. I had written it for no reason at all. I didn’t even think it would be a great song but then the last line came to me and I was, ‘Oh God, this has to be on the record’.

“It’s almost like a promise that no matter what goes wrong, what happens, I will come out on top and be the man in power, so to speak. So we recorded it really quick-

ly in one day. I actually played piano on that. I’m not a piano player by any means but we had to do it so fast.”

Daniel McBurnie was born and raised in Surrey, the son of a Scottish father and a mom from Whitehorse. His older brother, Shawn, now plays in the Minnesota-based traditional Celtic band Rumgumption. Daniel, though, largely grew up with his two sisters and his father’s record collection. Simon and Garfunkel struck a chord. The Byrds, too. Joan Baez. The Animals. The Clancy Brothers. Bob Dylan ... “I was into Bob Dylan from a young age. *Mr. Tambourine Man* was my favourite song growing up,” he volunteers.

His uncle, David Braithwaite, bought Daniel his first guitar at age 11. “He used to say when I was a toddler I couldn’t keep my hands off guitars and stuff.” Like most teenagers his age he was drawn to Green Day and such like. Their *Time Of Your Life* became the first song he learned to play. Then came a hardcore phase and even a stint at metal. Still, he retained a soft spot for acoustic music.

“I had very wide taste in music. I could listen to all sorts but as far as music I wanted to write it definitely fell under folk, traditional music. It hits me in a way that other music doesn’t.”

As fate would have it, McBurnie enrolled in Fleetwood Park Secondary High School in Surrey, to take Grade 11. There he soon met Sean MacKeigan, a metalhead with

a predilection for the accordion. Then a friend in math class talked McBurnie into performing at the school’s open mic at the Plush Café. Fellow students Graham Gomez, Alexa Unwin and Robert Hardie were there and duly impressed. And they recruited McBurnie for the school musical. And here’s where Harry Potter casts his omnipresent shadow.

“I got pulled into this musical and ended up doing the soundtrack with Graham. It was called *A Very Potter Musical*. It was actually a comedy about Harry Potter. The whole process of getting this production done was quite hard and it really brought us together. Then we realized, ‘Oh yeah, we’re still really good friends now and we play all this music’.

“So we started playing together a lot more, learning other people’s songs. We’d do covers. I had this whole repertoire of songs of my own that I was writing as a solo acoustic player and I was thinking, ‘OK, I’d like to write more for a band now’. And I ended pushing the idea of a natural band to everyone and everyone was super. So I kind of snuck in there, writing songs and bringing them to everyone. As we went along we took it more seriously.”

Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, Good For Grapes started out performing at open mics and benefit concerts. At the drop of a hat they’d busk around Vancouver and as far away as Victoria. Indeed, on the ferry to Vancouver Island Unwin asked Gomez if



Good for Grapes on Vancouver's Jericho Beach



Pickin' n' Clickin'

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he'd like some grapes, which produced the now celebrated response: 'No thanks, I'm good for grapes'.

"We thought, 'That sounds stupid—it's a perfect name for a band'," McBurnie told our Tim Readman in issue No. 57. Coincidentally, as they thrashed about on the ferry drawing a fair crowd, their first paying gig manifested itself in the form of a fan, Catherine English.

"On that ferry ride someone was watching," says McBurnie. "We hadn't done a show yet; we were just rehearsing. And we got a call from [Catherine's] parents saying they were throwing a birthday party and they wanted us to play and they would pay us. So we went, 'Oh, that's perfect'. So we went and played some originals but mostly covers."

That first paying gig took place in Langley in the autumn of 2010. By the spring of 2011, McBurnie had written enough songs for the band to make a seven-track, self-titled EP. Recorded in MacKeigan's basement for buttons, it has now sold more than 2,000 copies. As McBurnie rightfully points out, though, it failed to capture the inexhaustible energy of their live shows.

That vigour would increase exponentially with the recruitment of drummer Blair Hansen, and one-man brass section Jesse Brook. The band found both on Craigslist of all places.

"It's a funny story because I put an ad up for a trombone player and Blair responded, 'Listen, I'm not a trombone player; I am a drummer. But I noticed your band doesn't have drums'. And he sent a video in of himself playing drums and I was like, 'Done, sweet, awesome'. He was committed and he is really talented so I said, 'Of course'. And he came to rehearsal and that was that."

McBurnie chuckles when I point out that only Calixeco in North America front a brass section performing contemporary roots music.

"I always wanted brass," he says. "I've always loved the sound of the trombone. So I was really pushing to get a trombone player in the band. And so we found Jesse who played trombone and trumpet and stuff. It was perfect because I had this idea the accordion and the trombone sound together was really cool. Graham was starting to play a lot of slide guitar tones—going up and down, not in semi-tones, just fluidly. A

trombone can also do that. So I kept getting ideas about lead parts that can be shared by trombone and slide guitar, just this wacky concept. Actually, there's evidence on the record."

Yes, yes ... there is, most notably a wonderful reworking of *London Fog*—one of two tracks resuscitated from the earlier EP. Whatever, that EP provided Good For Grapes with a calling card and Linda Tanaka booked them for the Vancouver Folk Festival that summer. It was their most prestigious date to that point, and let me tell you, their set was one of most memorable gigs I saw that year—full of fun and swagger as they lept about, mad as a box of frogs, clearly having a ball.

"The way it started out, we were having fun playing, and Sean, being the dance leader that he is, started going crazy," says McBurnie. "And we were going, 'Hey that's neat; that's how I feel'. All our shows have been definitely high energy. That's something we were known for."

"We love folk festivals. Vancouver was huge for us. It just got us in front of so many new people. We got such a great response there. The Edmonton folk fest [in 2013] was even better. It was crazy. We sold something like 300 CDs. We sold out."

"There is such a cool festival atmosphere at Vancouver and Edmonton, people smiling, and listening to the music, and dancing, and really opening up to young bands such as ourselves."

Between their twin triumphs in Vancouver and Edmonton, Good For Grapes made it to the finals of CBC-TV's *Canada's Got Talent*. The CBC, however, demanded the band sign a video and a recording contract. They took one look at the wording and balked.

"The deal was not very good at all. It was complete shit," says McBurnie. "So we said, 'No we're not going to sign'. They said, 'You have to if you want to be in the finals'. So we said, 'Well, we won't be in the finals'. They said, 'You have to anyway because blah, blah, blah'. It ended up we said, 'No'. So they charged us for the airline tickets they booked and that was the end of it. It was kind of rough, but..."

But ... they signed for the accommodating, artist-friendly, Toronto label Pheromone Recordings—home to the likes of Wilderness of Manitoba, The Dears and Mo



Kenney—and made *The Man On The Page*. What's more, they recruited Colin Stewart as producer. Stewart, of course, made Dan Mangan's breakthrough recording *Oh Fortune*. A member of the chatterati made the connection.

"One of our friend's mom posted a link on Dan's wall on Facebook saying to check out our band. I didn't know Dan but I've met him since. We got an email from Colin Stewart saying, 'Hey, I saw this link on Dan's wall; you guys are pretty cool. I want you to come and check out the studio'. He was saying he would do a couple of songs for free. This is, like, over a year ago. So we went and met him and saw the studio and was really impressed. I love Dan Mangan's record *Oh Fortune*. It's one of my favourite records ever. So it was, 'Wow! To get a chance to work with this guy was amazing'. It was always in our minds when we did the record he would be the producer and I think he knew that, too."

"Having played these songs a lot before recording them, we knew exactly what they wanted to sound like so basically it was all about going in and trying to get the live sound down—how we play live. Whereas our next record will probably be more along the lines of tinkering in the studio."

Catch them while you can still afford it.



# James Keelaghan

## The Penguin Eggs Interview



James Keelaghan

One of the most respected and recognized voices in Canadian folk music, James Keelaghan celebrates a quarter of a century of recording and performing with the release of *History: The First 25 Years*—a compilation of his songs that span 11 albums. These 11 discs include two recorded as Compadres with Chilean guitarist Oscar Lopez. The new CD also comes accompanied with an insightful and often humorous DVD on which Keelaghan provides background information for each song—some of which have been in his repertoire since his teens in Calgary.

Keelaghan started out performing in pubs and clubs around his hometown while earning a masters degree in history at the University of Calgary. His debut album, *Timelines* released in 1987, first earned provincial and then national recognition. And he has rarely looked back, touring

the world with such celebrated sidemen as Spirit of the West's Hugh McMillan and the late Oliver Schroer. Not surprisingly, Keelaghan's songs are frequently placed in an historical context. They touch on various topics such as The Battle of the Plains of Abraham (*Abraham*), The Riel Rebellion (*Red River Rising*), The Great Depression (*Boom Gone To Bust*), the internment of Japanese-Canadian's during the Second World War (*Keri's Piano*) and, most notably, the 1949 Mann Gulch forest fire (*Cold Missouri Waters*). For the past two years Keelaghan has also worked at Owen Sound's Summerfolk as its artistic director, restricting his touring so his festival obligations do not clash with his concert dates.

Roddy Campbell posed the following questions to him prior to the recent Canadian Folk Music Awards gala event in Calgary.

There are always songs left out on these sorts of projects and the most noticeable for me is *Hillcrest Mine*.

*Hillcrest Mine*, it's on *Small Rebellions* and it's on *Then Again* and it's firmly entrenched in the minds of my listening public. And some of these things on the new record I want to remind people of.

You could say the same about *Cold Missouri Waters*, which you included, though.

I could but we went back to the original version. And we're also trying to keep radio in mind in the States and reminding people. *Cold Missouri Waters* is more of a calling card for people who aren't familiar with my stuff.

*Cold Missouri Waters* has been in the spotlight again due to the forest fire tragedy in Arizona. What sort of reverberations has it produced for you?

Whenever there is a disaster involving smokejumpers, or firefighters in general, that song tends to get another life. But then this summer it just went way over the top. When the news of the disaster in Arizona struck, obviously one of the things I thought of was that song. But then I began to see it popping up on people's Facebook pages, people sharing it on webpages. A newspaper in New Jersey talked about me and it popped up on the cover of *USA Today*. It reaffirms for me the power of a song, especially a folk song, to be able to spread that quickly. For the next 300 years that song is going to have some part to play because it talks to situations that happen all the time. That's what I think good folk-songs or story telling should do. In a way, it's another thing that humbles you because, you know, I wrote that thing and I played it and I sent it out into the world and it now wanders the world all by itself. It now seems to have a life of its own, which to me



is the most amazing thing.

**What inspired you to conclude *Cold Missouri Waters* with the melody of *Shenandoah*?**

It just seemed to me a logical point to end that song. It's a song that keeps mentioning the Missouri. Death is often referred to as crossing the river and so with a beautiful tune like *Shenandoah*, it mentions the Missouri River, it's almost like I could see Dodge fading out of this world and fading into whatever is after this world with that as the theme song. I don't know why but for some reason I thought he was maybe thinking about that song.

**What was the criteria for picking the songs for *History*?**

I think in terms of selection, the whole thing for me was trying to get a cross-section together from across my whole career. Even on iTunes, *Compadres* was in a different place than James Keelaghan. So we tried to bring that stuff into context, just to give a really broad look at the whole thing. Some of the picks were personal choices, stuff that I wanted to highlight—things like *Lazurus* that has now worked its way back into the lexicon. It was a matter of sitting listening to everything and going, 'Wow! Actually, I'd forgotten about that song', and dropping it in.

**Whose idea was the DVD?**

Bill [Garrett] and Grit [Laskin]. They wanted me to introduce the songs for those who were not quite familiar with them.

***A Few Simple Verses* (2008), *Then Again* (2004) and now *History* feature either traditional songs or a reworking of your own material. You've mentioned writer's block in the past. What's its status now?**

There's ebbs and flows of what I want to do and there's different parts of my brain I exercise at different times. I mean, *House of Cards* [2009] was about half co-write and half individual writing. Maybe I'm in a bit of a rut. But it feels like until the muse really cranks up in me again I'm not going to push. I'm not worried about it. I'm not

upset about it. I don't feel like I have to produce. There's 11 CDs worth of stuff out there. So I feel I have produced.

The song will come around again. I just can't refer to it as writer's block. For it to be writer's block I would have to sit down and try to write a song and be blocked. And really, I haven't consciously sat down and tried to write a song in a couple of years.

I've been looking around out there and have noticed how rare it is for people to put out albums every two years. When I have enough material to put out an original album I will.

**When you started out you played a 12-string guitar and were clearly influenced by Stan Rogers. How did you find your own voice?**

I think you're always influenced by people. There's no doubt Stan Rogers was an influence. Liam Clancy was a huge influence. I think I always had my own voice, it was just a matter of how to get that voice to come out onstage. I can listen to tapes of me when I was 17, 18, 14 years old and that's the voice that's on there. And it was just a matter of how I was going to express myself. When I was 13 or 14, I would take a piece of poetry and write over the lines in order to understand the structure. And it's the same way of structuring a set of music. You have those set of influences like Stan, and Liam [Clancy], and Tommy [Makem], and what not and then you have the other influences like people like Gary Bird, Ron

Cassat and Bill Eaglesham, who were the guys who whipped me into shape onstage, who taught me what performance technique was all about and how you arranged the set list.

You can talk about songwriting influences and everything else; there comes a time when you have to get your feet on a stage and know exactly what to do. I think every young musician should have these people around, who do show you the actual stage craft, the actual nuts and bolts of it: how you plug the thing in, how you stand onstage, how you arrange the set list, the pacing of a show, what do you say in between songs, those million and one things you never think about but are actually part of the stage craft.

**Is there one song you are particularly proud of?**

I'm going to say two. I think the one I'm most proud of is *Kiri's Piano*. In terms of storytelling, in terms of a song with a message—to be able to take something that was a lost story and turn it into a song that means something—I'm pretty proud of that. I'm also incredibly proud of a song like *McConnville*. Again, I've managed to reach near perfection in the storytelling, if I do say so myself, on that particular song.

**You received an incredible amount of personal feedback from *Kiri's Piano*, yes?**

I know of a bunch of children who have



Iain Matthews and James Keelaghan, Tonder, Denmark, 1993



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been named after the song. There's now a short film coming out by a director from up in the Northwest Territories about it. I've ended up with a guitar that basically sunk at Pearl Harbor that I am now the custodian of. That song touches people in a very visceral way. Not just people of Japanese-Canadian heritage. I was afraid of playing it in Denmark a few years ago, and Carsten Panduro [artistic director] of the Tønder Festival said, 'You have to play it'. I played it and had this amazing reaction. And I talked to him about it afterwards and he said, 'Well, you know, Denmark was occupied during the Second World War, they know what you are singing about. It's about that kind of feeling it's not about that one instance'. I guess when you write a song, when it is about one incident and you personalize it, I think you've done your job.

**As a boy, you and your dad attended all the Tommy Makem and Liam Clancy television shows filmed in Calgary in the mid-'70s; what do you remember about them?**

What stuck in my mind was being close enough to see what they were actually doing. I love and still love those two as performers and as deliverers of songs. It's hard to get two people in the annals of folk music that can put a song across like these two guys. It's jaw-dropping how effortless it seemed, and how humble they seemed. I remember the stuff that happened in between songs. They would talk to each other the way they would talk to the audience. They were just stunning performers. I can still find aspects of Tommy Makem's sound in my voice. He was a fabulous singer, fabulous.

***Spanish Is The Loving Tongue* on History, was that inspired by Liam's singing?**

Yes it was. That was my favourite version of it for a long time. I hadn't listened to it in years but I sort of pulled it out as a piece for Oscar and I to play. I sort of did it in my mind the way Liam did it. When I went back and listened to Liam's version it was quite different. My version is what I remember him sounding like, if you know what I mean. It's such a beautiful song. And I think it's become one of the Compadres' signature tunes.

**Was there a solitary defining moment when you realized, yes, I want to become a songwriter?**

I'll honestly have to say no. I don't think there was one eureka moment. Singing and playing has always been part of what I do. I don't think up until five years ago I knew what I was going to do with the rest of my life. Things came on slowly. When I recorded the first album I thought I'll do this for a couple more years and I'll go back and do a law degree. I turned around and it's 25 years later.

I have to say, I've been having this ongoing health problem. I haven't been able to feel my left hand in about three years. I have a nerve trapped in my neck. And anytime that had happened in the past in my mind I said, 'I could still go back



and get that law degree'. Or, 'I could still do this or do that'. When it happened three years ago my very first thought was, 'Well, I could still go and hire a guitar player, or a piano player, or something. It was the first time ever that my mind acknowledged that this was what I do for a living and that was after 22 years. I think a lot of us are in that same position. We all have some sense of inadequacy, or were fooling people, or maybe this isn't really our job even if we've been doing it for this long.

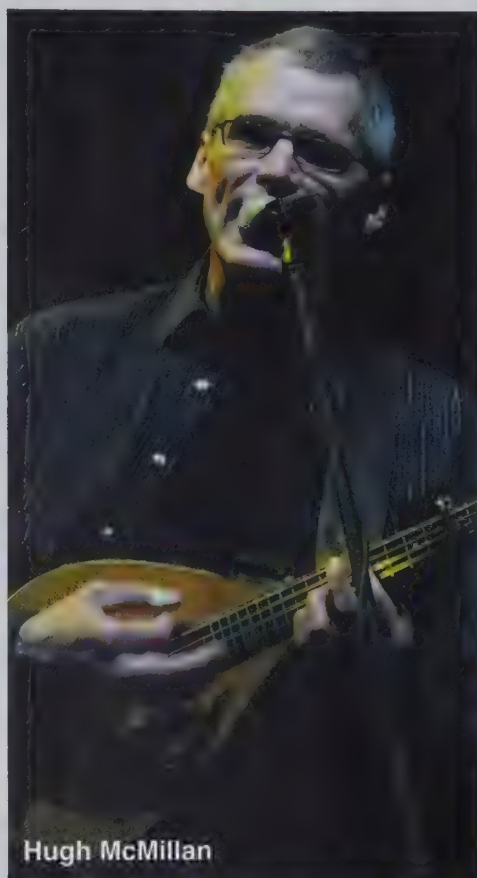
**You are also the artistic director of Summerfolk in Owen Sound. What have been the biggest challenges for you?**

The biggest joy is picking the people that are going to be there, figuring out how they are going to work together in workshops, the whole logistics of how the scheduling works. It's one of the most fun jobs I have ever had in my entire life. I'm on for at least another two years. That means I'll be doing the 40th anniversary party, which is great. The first two years I really concentrated on people who hadn't been to the festival. I love bringing new stuff to people and a lot of it is new stuff to me: people like The Lemon Bucket Orchestra, Cécile Doo-Kingué, Sweet Alibi or Oh My Darling, really tremendous, tremendous musicians. It's great trying to combine them and redefine them.

I had a moment after the first [festival] when I was circulating in the hotel at 4:30 in the morning and a young artist, gave me a hug and she said to me, 'Thanks for restoring our faith in music. We were actually thinking of giving this up before we got here this weekend'. It totally renewed their energy and their faith in music. And that's what a festival should do for performers. And that's really what I want this festival to keep on doing. That's the reason I applied for the job. I didn't want some beancounter getting the job and looking at it as a dollar-and-cents thing and forgetting about the ethics of a folk festival.

**How does working for a folk festival and touring as a musician work out?**

So far it hasn't been a problem. It dovetails really nice. It allows me, on the musical side of my life, to be a little bit picky of



Hugh McMillan

where I'm going and being able to say no a little more. I appreciate that. It also means coming up into the early part of next year I've actually got some down time when I'll be doing office work for the festival and maybe writing songs or maybe doing some other kind of writings, which, when you're on the road...

**Hugh McMillan has worked with you longer than anybody else. What is the essence he brings to your music?**

I think Hugh brings an unerring ear for melody, and an unerring ear to support my songs. We were playing Australia once and somebody came up to him after a show and said, 'You know what, I didn't notice you onstage but I would have completely missed you if you weren't there'. That's got to be the sign of a fantastic sideman—he supports but he doesn't take over. And Hugh has always had that ability. He's adding a ton of stuff to the music but if you subtract it you go, 'Hey that stuff isn't there, what's going on?'. He brings a subtlety and he also brings a long-term friendship. We've known each other for 30 years and so when we go on the road, for three or four weeks on tours, there's a really comfortable relationship.

**What is the current status of Compadres?**

Compadres is really recording-driven. If we record something, that will lead to about two years' worth of touring then we'll leave it fallow. We've sort of gone for a recording once every 10 years. The first one was in '97, the second was 2007 and we're probably going to do one in 2017.

**How do you remember your former partner Oliver Schroer?**

To tell you the truth, I still find it hard to talk about Oliver because, after all that time, it still makes me sad. He was just totally, totally one of a kind and one of the most amazing humans I have ever met in my life—not just as a musician, he was brilliant on any number of levels. If you wanted to talk philosophy, if you wanted to talk literature, if you wanted to talk about film, anything you wanted to talk about with Ollie, he was there. What I loved most about him was his appetite for life. Recording two albums with him was amazing but spending, basically, 10 years on the road together, that was one of the most amazing trips I have ever been on in my life. He was a fantastic travel companion. What I said to him the last time I talked to him two weeks before he died, we were heading off to tour England, I said to him that basically he had been a brother, a father, an uncle, and a friend, he'd been all those things at the same time. He was an amazing man.



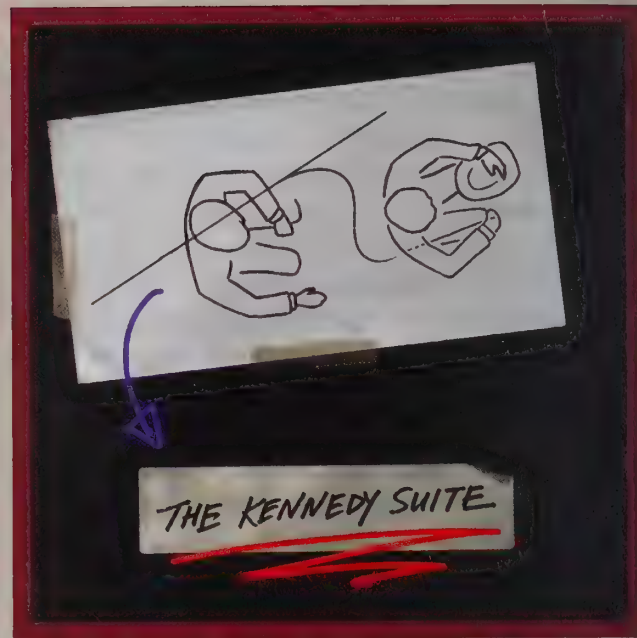
Oliver Schroer



# REVIEW NEWS



TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND  
MADE UP MIND



THE KENNEDY SUITE



THE AVETT BROTHERS  
UPLIFT



BLACKIE AND THE RODEO KINGS  
SOUTH



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I don't want  
to  
you won't  
griv  
until  
or



HAZE  
CHASSE-GALERIE

"South, despite its title, is the perfect recording to hunker down with during a cold northern Canadian winter and it is a musical tour de force."

— Blackie And The Rodeo Kings, Page 55

"Martin Simpson has transcended borders and oceans, to quietly become a superb storyteller and musician of great depth and unquestionable taste."

— Martin Simpson, Page 55





Clayton Linthicum and Kacy Anderson

## Kacy & Clayton

The Day Is Past & Gone (Saskomusic)

This second album from the all-acoustic Saskatchewan duo of Kacy Anderson and Clayton Linthicum offers further evidence for the virtues of keeping things spare and simple. Drawing inspiration and tunes from both British and American folk, folk-blues, and spirituals, they've crafted a lovely set of songs that breathe deeply and flow naturally, benefiting from her clear, plaintive voice and his mild guitar strumming.

His voice chimes in on a few tracks such as *Let It Shine On Me* or *I'll Be So Glad*, creating something akin to a campfire chorus while solo numbers like *The Daleman's Litany* recall Maddy Prior's legacy. At some points—the opening bars of *Pretty Saro*—his subtle backing of fiddle or pump organ amplifies the moodiness, bringing a hint of mystery to her comfortable melancholy and their satisfying purity.

The duo's writing skills shine through, too, on originals such as *Rocks And Gravel* or *The Downward Road*, fitting nicely

beside the quiet celebration of classics such as *The Cherry Tree Carol*. It's timeless stuff. — By Roger Levesque

## Quinn Bachand

Brishen (Independent)

When young Master Bachand burst onto the scene a few years back with his sister Qristina, we were astonished by his amazing Celtic rhythm playing. The phrase 'you ain't seen nothing yet' would have been apt in light of his latest release. *Brishen* contains some breathtaking playing, with 17-year-old Bachand front and centre as lead guitarist. It is the result of the discovery that his love for gypsy jazz is shared with violinist Richard Moody, which in turn led to the creation of this fine CD.

Reuben Wier plays rhythm guitar and sings and Joey Smith weighs in on upright bass. This isn't a conventional collection of Django-esque covers, although *Belleville* and *Nuages* do find their way into the mix. There's also a Romanian dance tune, a Radiohead cover and a Gershwin tune, as well as orig-

inals from both Bachand and Moody. *Brishen* is a wonderfully creative and entertaining musical tour de force from Canada's hottest young guitarist.

— By Tim Readman

## Bob Dylan

Another Self Portrait: Bootleg Series Vol. 10 (Columbia)

What we really should be doing is getting Ryan Adams to review this two-disc assemblage of outtakes, rearrangements, demos, and previously unreleased songs from (mostly) *Self Portrait* and *New Morning* and *Nashville Skyline*. Adams always argued rather passionately for a more favourable reassessment of *Self Portrait*, and he was probably right to do so, based on the tracks appearing on the tenth official Dylan bootleg. I'd certainly agree that the bare-bones version of *Copper Kettle* far surpasses the original, and there's a grin-inducing jauntiness to the stripped down take of *Wig Wam*, one of Dylan's flimsiest efforts, that actually makes it somewhat appealing. The acoustic take of *Time Passes Slowly* (from *New Morning*) is quite lovely, the horn section on the title track from *New Morning* itself somewhat strange, but not awful, while many of the

trad songs (*Little Sadie*, *Days of '49*) from *Self Portrait* benefit from gloss being stripped back. *Went to See the Gypsy*, which was apparently demoed for *Self Portrait* but ended up on *New Morning*, is one of the set's best finds, as is the alternative take of *Wallflower*, and a stomping, shouting live take from the Isle of Wight of *Highway 61 Revisited*. So is the old boy vindicated? Well, yes and no. *Another Self Portrait* is an excellent corrective to a weird little blip in Dylan's early career, and a treasure trove of fantastic, rare tracks, but no amount of recanting or revisiting will ever make me forget the hideousness of *All the Tired Horses*, string section or no string section.

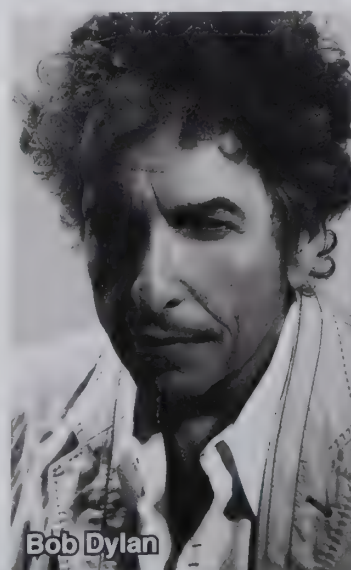
— By Tom Murray

## Billie Joe + Norah

Foreverly (Reprise)

Who would have thought the kids had it in them? Not that Norah Jones and Green Day's Billy Joe Armstrong could bond over a classic Everly Brothers album so much as the fact that they were able to pull it off with a certain amount of élan. It still isn't a patch on the original *Songs Our Daddy Taught Us* but this doesn't mean *Foreverly* is a failure; it's a nice little minimalist restructuring of an album that deserves as much latter day attention as it can get. Armstrong is a surprisingly flexible singer on these tunes, especially with Jones there to buttress him, and they actually mix pretty well together. They sound especially sweet on the old traditional *Whose Going to Shoe Your Pretty Little Feet* and that old Gene Autry weeper *That Silver-Haired Daddy of Mine* but there really isn't a bad track here. It won't replace my original copy, but it'll do in a pinch.

— By Tom Murray



Bob Dylan



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## Reviews

### Tedeschi Trucks Band

Made Up Mind (Columbia Masterworks)

Lots of critical accolades and Grammy Awards following these happy campers through their still relatively young career, and it's easy to understand why. Both Susan Tedeschi and Derek Trucks have impeccable blues lineages as singer and guitarist, respectively, the band can tear it up live (two drummers! Horn section!), playing with incision and immediacy the kind of '60s/'70s soul and blues-rock that seemed to have disappeared into aimless jam-bandery. Still seems tepid to me, unfortunately, possibly because what works as riffage and dope rhythm section interlocking doesn't necessarily pan out as tuneage, at least to this set of what might be tin ears. There is admittedly a soft spot for *Whiskey Legs*, maybe only for the imagery, possibly for that rolling groove, but nothing else. Chalk it up to the to-may-toe/to-mah-to conundrum and check it out for yourself.

— By Tom Murray

### Natacha Atlas

Habibi: Classics and Collaborations

(Nascente)

This double CD set is an historical overview of the 20-plus year career of singer Natacha Atlas, including music from her early days with bassist Jah Wobble and Transglobal Underground, selections from her fine solo recordings with Nation Records, and many of various collaborations. Born in Belgium, raised in the U.K., with an English mother and father with roots in Morocco, Egypt, and Palestine,

Atlas comes to her music with a very diverse background. These wide-ranging collaborations, the focus of the second CD, range from working with Rajastani group Musafir, guitarist Justin Adams's Ghostland project, Sephardic singer Yasmin Levy, U.K./Indian guitarist Nitin Sawhney, composer Jocelyn Pook, and English folk musician Andrew Cronshaw.

It's Atlas's supple, Middle Eastern evoking vocal style that draws upon the greats such as Fairouz, Umm Kalthoum, and Abdel Halim Hafez, that established her in the late '90s but it's her own experimental nature and musical reaching out that makes her something special—and an artist very difficult to pigeon hole. This generous collection shows off both sides of this unique singer.

— By Jonathan Kertzer

### Tim O'Brien and Darrell Scott

Memories and Moments (Full Skies

Records)

I remember being absolutely blown away by Darrell Scott and Tim O'Brien at Wintergrass back in 2001. I marvelled at how two guys could make more music than the succession of quintets I watched over the weekend.

There's more than enough to blow me away on their long-awaited release, coming 13 years after *Real Time*, which has become somewhat of a classic in the roots music world. Over the long break the two have had storied careers, their songs from their umpteen solo albums recorded by the likes of Garth Brooks and the Dixie Chicks, and



**Jessica Rhaye**

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★★★★★  
- **Maverick Magazine UK**  
(5 star review)



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invitations to play in outfits like Robert Plant's Band of Joy and Mark Knopfler's band.

But this duo is way more than the sum of the parts. As they said in a recent interview, they push each other's country buttons, and much more. Recorded basically live, you can hear these multi-instrumentalists reacting to each other, while singing harmonies that make 'em sound like brothers.

There are tunes by Hank Williams and George Jones here, as well as a reading of John Prine's *Paradise*, which includes a guest appearance by Prine himself.

But it's the 10 originals by two of the finest American songwriters that drive this disc. Don't be surprised to hear songs like Scott's *It All Comes Down to Love* or O'Brien's *Free Again* covered by megastars but they won't hold a candle to the readings on this album.

— By Mike Sadava

## Blackie & The Rodeo Kings

South (EUM)

If it's hard to believe that almost 20 years have passed since Tom Wilson, Colin Linden, and Stephen Fearing came together as Blackie and The Rodeo Kings it's never been a stretch to think this triumvirate of respected tunesmiths was going to be in this for the long run.

The type of chemistry that sits at the root of this collective, a strangely shifting stability with an element of volatility, is the stuff that can't be forged or rehearsed into being, it just is.

From the standpoint of sonics and production, *South* is the most organic Blackie disc to date. Stripped bare arrangements, acoustic instrumentation, combined with vocal performances and lyrics that



Blackie & The Rodeo Kings,  
l to r: Stephen Fearing,  
Colin Linden and Tom Wilson

are never fighting for space in the mix, count as the common denominators in this 12-song collection.

Set to rhythms that breathe beautifully, Wilson, Fearing, and Linden at one moment burrow into the timeless theme of regret and remorse in the play of love (Fearing's *I'd Have To Be A Stone*), and the next find and frame, with empathy, those solitary, scattered lives created by a communities bound by lesser expectations (Wilson's *Gotta Stay Young*).

At the other end of the spectrum, the sun peaks through that overcast sky as the album heads home with Wilson's *I'm Still Loving You*, Linden's *Reinventing The Wheel of Love*, and Fearing's *Try Try Try Again*.

Less is more works overtime on this fabulous set, from the artfully executed brick-and-mortar grooves of drummer Gary Craig, Canada's Jim Keltner, and bassist John Dymond, plus Linden's mandolin dotted nods directed at heroes from Memphis jug bands to Willie P. Bennett's *Driftin' Snow*, which is a reminder of whose talents acted as the catalyst for the birth of this band.

*South* sounds like the cover of

Bruce Cockburn's *High Winds*, *White Sky* album looks. For some there is no escaping the strange sense of comfort found in the harsher aspects of life, yet thankfully we can be drawn to the perfectly etched beauty found in the black and white of our world.

*South*, despite its title, is the perfect recording to hunker down with during a cold northern Canadian winter and it is a musical tour de force.

— By Peter North

## Martin Simpson

Vagrant Stanzas (Topic)

Anybody familiar with Martin Simpson's recordings expects three things: pristine and un-

cluttered production, an eclectic selection of tunes and some of the most exquisite guitar playing on either side of the Atlantic. All of these elements are here in spades, but it came as a pleasant surprise to hear a banjo picking out the opening notes of *Diamond Joe*, the first track on this fine recording.

One of the things I like most about Simpson's music is (of course) his beautiful playing, but even more so — his singing, and nine of these fourteen tracks feature his honest, straightforward vocals. When I say "honest", I mean authentic, genuine and believable... something I feel is often missing when a performer such as Simpson — long associated with the British traditional-folk-scene — covers such N. American chestnuts as *Diamond Joe*, *Stranger Song*, and *North Country Blues* or brings his own vision to the table with the inspired *Delta Dreams*. Somehow, Simpson manages to hold firm to his UK roots whilst extending his reach clear across the sea to the heart of Americana without sounding contrived or false. No, Martin Simpson has transcended borders and oceans, to quietly



Martin Simpson



## Reviews

become a superb storyteller and musician of great depth and unquestionable taste.

—By Stephen Fearing.

### Terry Gillespie

Blue Soul (Independent)

If this album doesn't get Terry Gillespie his long overdue recognition, I don't know what will. Gillespie, who is based in the Ottawa-area hamlet of Vankleek Hill, could be considered a founder of Canadian roots music. Back in the late 1960s he formed Heaven's Radio, arguably one of the best obscure bands in history, which created a unique blend of blues and reggae for more than a decade.

Over the years Gillespie has dabbled in many kinds of music but on this effort, recorded live in a church in Maxville, ON,

he has gone back to the blues. The opening track, *The Devil Likes to Win*, sets the pace, powered by Gillespie's harp playing sounding like Little Walter did in the '50s. Then he poses the question: *What Would Bo Diddley Do?*, complete with that syncopated rhythm made famous by the man himself.

Gillespie isn't a flashy player but he doesn't need to be. Whether he's playing guitar or harmonica or singing, it's all about the phrasing, and all about the groove. He can say more in a simple riff than your Stevie Ray clones come out with in a flurry of notes. And he can write in the genre, as well as provide worthy interpretations of covers such as Junior Wells's *Early in the Morning*.

Kudos have to go to Gillespie's band. He has always

surrounded himself with tasty players and this time is no exception, with a solid rhythm section and standout keyboard playing by Peter Measroch.

—By Mike Sadava

### Tom Rush

Celebrates 50 Years of Music (Appleseed Recordings)

Tom Rush was one of the first recorded artists of the Folk Revival-era and helped the likes of Joni Mitchell, Jackson Browne, James Taylor, Murray McLauchlan, and David Wiffen along by both singing and recording their songs.

Perhaps because he was Boston-based (having attended Harvard studying English literature) rather than New York-based, he hasn't attained the legendary name recognition with the general public outside

the folk world but is every bit as pioneering an artist as those others.

His most recorded song, *No Regrets* from 1968, has been widely covered by a variety of artists (my own favourite version being by the late Frank Christian, another somewhat overlooked master). This set, containing both a DVD and a live CD of his 50-year anniversary in show business at Boston Symphony Hall, will, hopefully, tip history a little more in his direction. Looking a bit like Mark Twain these days with his bushy grey hair, moustache and white suit, Rush goes through a good long set of both his and other's tunes (including Joni Mitchell's *The Urge For Going*, Sleepy John Estes's *Drop Down Mama* and McLauchlan's *Child's Song*) he's recorded

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backed by guests such as David Bromberg, Jonathan Edwards, the duo of Buskin Batteau, guitarist Trevor Veitch, and Dom Flemons from the Carolina Chocolate Drops who, on the DVD, get to show off their own talents as well. The CD has three fewer tracks. Rush's voice is as strong as ever and it's a fine concert and CD.

— By Barry Hammond

## Lindi Ortega

*Tin Star* (Last Gang Records)

This is one of those discs that requires a few listenings to put it into perspective. The first time around you might just hear the overblown, echo-heavy production or the obvious rhymes and come away, as this critic did, with a slightly annoyed feeling. Stick with it a few more plays, however, and the directness and ballsy energy of the whole thing may begin to win you over and what at first seemed weaknesses become strengths. It may hit the listener over the head with the extreme lyrics of *Lived and Died Alone*, where she sings about going to “dig up the dead / Lift their bodies from their graves / And lay them on my bed”, or the straightforwardness of *Gypsy Child*, *Voodoo Mama*, or *Tin Star* but that raunchy simplicity coupled with producer Dave Cobb's pedal-to-the-metal guitar playing punches through to another level and you have to start admiring the “I’ll take no prisoners and do what I want to” attitude that seems to permeate Lindi Ortega's whole approach to performance. This kind of battering ram determination is what's powered this Torontonion-living-in-Nashville's career so far and may just take her even farther. It's an attitude that's hard to ignore and harder still to dismiss.

— By Barry Hammond



## MAZ

*Chasse-Galerie* (Bleu44)

Quebecois musicians have a special predilection for bonding traditional folk, jazz, and other genres in a quirky fashion that pays little heed to conventions.

Inspired by an old French-Canadian folktale, *Chasse-Galerie* is a further evolution of the MAZ sound that debuted on *Telescope* (2011), still recognizably a vehicle for chief composer Marc Maziade. He covers electric guitar, tenor banjo, and electronics but new personnel fill out the lineup: Benoit Coulombe (double bass), Pierre-Olivier Dufresne (violin, mandolin), and Gabriel Godbout-Castonguay (keyboards). Maziade and Dufresne also add their feet to the tight, uptempo beats.

You don't have to know the story to enjoy these inventive tunes, often mesmerizing for the way they trade off between melody and rhythm parts, mixing delicate fiddle or guitar solos with occasional power chords and organ effects akin to retro-rock, always tied to the groove. It's uplifting stuff, old and new, rustic and hi-tech all at once.

— By Roger Levesque

## Ross Ainslie and Jarlath Henderson

*Air-Fix ROSS* (Great White Records)

Take two great pipers, one from Scotland and the other from Ireland, and put them into the studio with some other great players and what do you get? In this case the answer is absolute magic. This is a wonderfully produced and thrilling CD from start to finish. Ross Ainslie (Scottish bagpipes, whistles) and Jarlath Henderson (uilleann pipes, whistles) are joined by Ali Hutton on guitar, James Watson on fiddle, Hamish Napier on keys, Alana Henderson on vocals, and a rhythm section of Duncan Lyall on bass and

James Mackintosh on drums. You might have already heard Ainslie performing with Salsa Celtica or Henderson with Capercaillie but I very much doubt if you've heard much like this before. There's lots of music that claims to push boundaries but unfortunately it can often fail to deliver on this promise but this ensemble can lay claim to that quality in spades. Stand-out tracks are the exuberantly funky instrumental *Hawk*, featuring a great fiddle intro from Watson (it's like The Average White Band meets Moving Hearts) and the totally gorgeous song *Anyone*, with stellar vocals from both Hendersons. Even the cover is great, with the pipers represented in the form of an Airfix model kit. Go get it!

— By Tim Readman

## Lucy Ward

*Single Flame* (Navigator Records)

This is the followup to critics' fave *Adelphi Has to Fly* from 23-year-old Lucy Ward, a British singer, guitarist, and concertina player from Derby. Megson's Stu Hanna produces and also plays keyboards, banjo, fiddle, and guitar. The mood is pretty sombre, with themes that spread from corrupt politics to love gone bad, over to death





## Reviews

and back to personal grief.

This is all original material with a couple of dark, traditional songs completing the set. One of these, *Lord I Don't Want to Die in the Storm*, provides perhaps the bleakest moments on the album, although her own *For the Dead Men* comes close. There are some great moments, such as the Leonard Cohen-esque *Last Pirouette*, but overall *Single Flame* flatters to deceive. It's all a bit ponderous and in danger of collapsing under its own weight. Still, there's potential here. Next time I'd suggest more light, less shade.

— By Tim Readman

### Little Suns

Normal Human Feelings (Independent)

My iTunes tells me that Toronto's Little Suns qualify as "alternative" in the vast, hyphenated system of musical taxonomy. I'm much relieved this matter has been settled, lest I have to come up with my own tag for Normal Human Feelings. Symphonic ethnic folk-prog, anyone? Euphonious gentile klez-mariachi? Almost, but not quite. Primarily, there's something rapturous about the entire enterprise. The songs bob and weave and swivel but they never touch the ground, whether snaking through a buoyant 7/8 groove (*Sunboat*), blooming from mournful rubato strings to hiccupy unison synco-pation and an XTC-worthy vocal line (*Black Elephant*), or straddling a fluffy cloud (*Wake Up*). *Them Girls* is sombre pop balladry interspersed with a beautiful Turkish processional replete with bouzouki, clarinet, and violin, and a tango for a re-

frain. Don't tell me I haven't piqued your interest yet.

— By Scott Lingley

### The High Bar Gang

Lost & Undone (True North)

There ain't a single fly on *Lost & Undone*, the "Gospel Bluegrass Companion" featuring the ringers assembled by guitarist/singer Colin Nairne, lifelong music professionals to a one, including Barney Bentall and Shari Ulrich. The acoustic instrumentation is impeccable, as expected, but the sound is really anchored by the perfectly woven voices of Ulrich, Wendy Bird, and Angela Harris, who bring soul and excitement to the traditional chestnuts assembled here. On the first listen, I thought, "This is great but do we really need another version of *Rank Strangers* or *I Saw the Light*?" Then the second time I thought, "We definitely need those versions of *Rank Strangers* and *I Saw the Light*."

— By Scott Lingley

### Cox and Hurrie

Revisited (Independent)

Sometimes when two gifted musicians get together the result of the combination is much greater than the sum of the parts. For the past two decades, Doug Cox and Sam Hurrie have made magic together, albeit with some breaks in between. They're back on again, and have released this remastered retrospective disc of earlier recordings.

Both Cox and Hurrie are both known for their slide playing, and between them they add guitar, mandolin, mohan veena, and manage to create a variety of sound that never gets redundant. The



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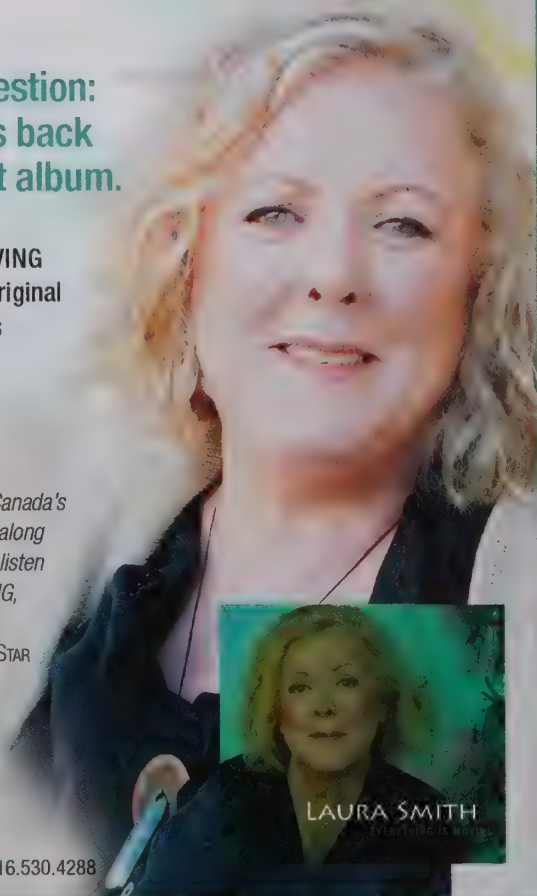
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disc just rolls on, and you'll be surprised that an hour has passed.

They do play the traditional Piedmont blues like nobody's business but then throw in surprises like a raga version of the fiddle tune *Red Haired Boy* or a revved-up version of the gospel song *John the Revelator*. They even include a Hurrie rant called *Fear*, a lament about how society is being bent by fear over terror, earthquakes and flu. My favourite is their reading of my personal favourite Rolling Stones song, *No Expectations*, and Cox's haunting *Bad News*. With such a great catalogue, we can only hope that Cox and Hurrie will soon be rushing back to the recording studio.

— By Mike Sadava

## Mike Stevens & Okaidja Afroso

Where's the One? (Borealis)

What do you get when you pair a versatile harmonica player from Sarnia, ON, with a gifted singer and multi-instrumentalist from Ghana? The spirited duo known as Canadafrica. On their first album together, Stevens, a Son House devotee who's married blues harp with bluegrass, and Okaidja, a former member of the Ghana Dance Ensemble who emigrated to Portland, OR, to work with master drummer Obo Addy, cook up a tasty roots stew. There are folk and bluegrass flavours on *Like a Little Bird* and *You Ain't No Good*, and numbers like *Abifao* and *Dagarti* benefit from the African spice of Okaidja's percussive workouts.

Some are message songs: *Just a Boy*, which has the hypnotic pull of Ali Farka Touré's Malian blues, and *Colour Blind*, featuring Okaidja's scat vocals and Stevens's wailing harp,



espouse racial tolerance. But there's also humour in *Keeping the Mosquitoes Away*, which conjures up visions of madly swatting at buzzing hoards. Together, Stevens and Okaidja create an infectious fusion.

— By Nicholas Jennings

## Stan Rogers

The Collection (Borealis)

If you're searching for the essence of Anglo-Canadian folk music, this is it.

It's hard to fathom that Stan Rogers (1949-1983) recorded as much lasting music as he did in less than a decade leading up to his untimely death in an airplane fire at 33. Rogers's vision expanded beyond the Maritime themes tied to his familial roots to take in much of the country, with a gift for spinning tales matched by his concern for common people and social justice.

His unforgettable voice was tender enough to deliver moving ballads, deep and fearless in spirit elsewhere, and he kept company with some of the best musicians around (Ken Whiteley, John Allan Cameron), helping to launch his brother

Garnet Rogers's career, too.

This handsome box packs the five key albums Rogers made before his passing, already issued in carefully remastered editions over the past couple of years: *Fogarty's Cove* (1976), *Turnaround* (1978), *Between The Breaks... Live!* (1979), *Northwest Passage* (1981), and *From Fresh Water* (1984).

The bonus 25-minute, five-track EP of live tracks covers friends like David Essig and Bob Franke (an a cappella trio take of Ian Robb's *The Old Rose & Crown* is a highlight).



Finally, there's a DVD of the 1989 documentary *One Warm Line* with additional commentaries and two striking trio clips that show again what Rogers could do in concert.

Kudos to producer Paul Mills and Borealis for archiving this cornerstone of Canadian folk in the style he deserves.

— By Roger Levesque

## Emma Cloney

Stars for Streetlights (Independent)

Emma Cloney is a singer/songwriter from Winnipeg who has been through some tough times in her life. The title *Stars for Streetlights* refers to the loss of her ranch and a move to the city due to financial troubles. Survival meant giving up most of the family possessions and starting all over again. This provided the creative impetus for making this CD. There are some solid contributions from some of Manitoba's finest, including Patti Lamoureux, Dan Frechette, and Jessee Harvey. *Stars for Streetlights* is a document of personal revelation and self-discovery which shows some promise.

— By Tim Readman

## Cowboy Junkies

The Kennedy Suite (Latent Recordings)

Events on some days affect the world more than events on others.

For most baby boomers, the life-defining date Nov. 22, 1963, is seared into their memory. After this single day in Dallas, TX, everything was immediately different.

Scott Garbe became more interested in that day than most others, even though he never lived through it—he was born in 1964. *The Kennedy Suite* is the result of his interest and tenacity. He wrote the 15-song cycle about the John F. Kennedy assassination over years,



# Reviews

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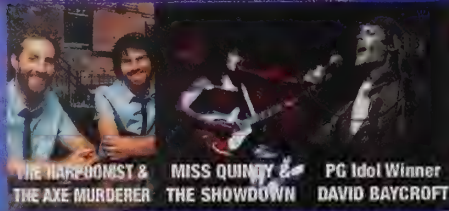
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completing most of the work in 2003. Shepherded by Michael Timmons of the Cowboy Junkies, *The Kennedy Suite* was finished and released in time for the 50th anniversary of the shooting.

It is a stunning piece of work, accessible and entertaining, even if you have no idea of what transpired that day so long ago

From the first song *Origami Peace Corps Mischief Maker*, angrily bellowed by Hawksley Workman, through Jessy Bell Smith's innocent, sweet version of *The Dallas Youth Auxiliary*, a tune about lovesick sisters who steal their father's car to catch a glimpse of the president, to the concluding song *White Man In Decline*, amazingly delivered by Sarah Harmer, not a foot or note is set wrong. It a terrific piece of work by all involved. *The Suite* also features appearances by Harlan Pepper, Jason Collett, The Good Family, Lee Harvey Osmond, and Martin Tielli, amongst others. A terrific piece of work. It was performed live Nov. 22 and 23, 2013,

in Toronto. I hope it's not the last time. It would be amazing to see *The Kennedy Suite* performed live. Congratulations to all involved. It's a good 'un.

— By les siemieniuk

### Tim Hus

Western Star (Stony Plain Records)

*Western Star* is the sixth disc for Tim Hus and his third for Stony Plain Records. These last ones (including *Hockeytown* and *Bush Pilot Buckaroo*) have pretty well enshrined him (along with Corb Lund and Stompin' Tom Connors) as one of the giants of Canadian country. He seems to crank out song after song with effortless skill. This disc has some new classics: *Church of Country Music*, where "we believe in George Jones," has got to be one of the best but there are many others on this disc, particularly including *Halifax Blues*, *Hardcore Apple Picker*, and *Wild Rose Waltz*, where his eye for Canadiana detail and a great turn of phrase combine to make an instant standard. Obviously other musi-

cians are also taking note. This disc has the best backing lineup yet. From producer Harry Stinson on through studio whiz Ken-ny Vaughn, Tim Graves (nephew of Uncle Josh Graves, the original Dobro player for Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs), Fats Kaplan, Billy MacInnis, Riley Tubbs, Wanda Vick, and Chris Scruggs—it's top-flight talent all the way. There doesn't seem to be any limit on where Hus may wind up in the history books.

— By Barry Hammond

### Roy Book Binder

The Good Book (Peg Leg Records)

### Spider John Koerner with Chip Taylor Smith

What's Left of Spider John (Hornbeam Records)

Here are two variations on old-time music, grounded in folk and country blues, injected with distinct personalities awash in a love for the music. Roy Book Binder, at 72, hasn't aged a day in his approach and this 10-track love letter to the blues is testament to his dogged perseverance. A disciple and student of the Rev. Gary Davis, he's not shy with his slide and lap steel. Harmonica, bass, clarinet, and percussion flesh out this 10-track release, depending on where he wants to travel to. Smart lyrics join songwriting that sounds like pure yesteryear yet is original fare. His somewhat pinched vocals are reminiscent of a higher-pitched Leon Redbone yet you can hear the smile in his voice as he covers



Tim Hus

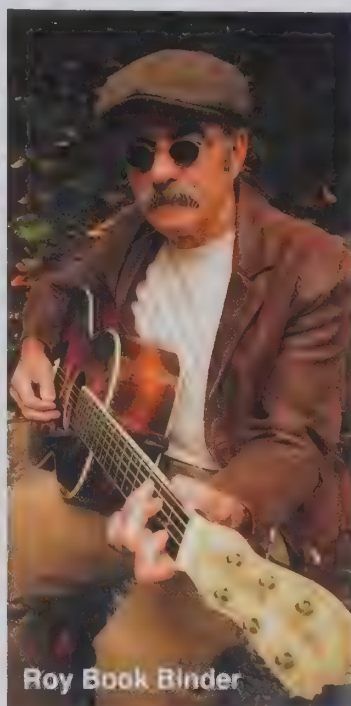


Depression-era material like the Cooder-esque title track, while songs like *Step Right Up* swing as hard as anything, aided by Frank Bowman's clarinet.

*What You Gonna Do* reveals his stellar picking while the fun inherent in *Electric Cigarette Blues* blends the modern with the traditional, tongue firmly in cheek.

At 77, Spider John Koerner has been working his magic since the onset of the folk revival of the late '50s, popularizing early folk and blues music and influencing a *Who's Who* of singer/songwriters along the way. A veteran of the coffee house circuit back before there was one, Koerner has always been, either as part of his band Koerner, Ray & Glover or on his own, champion to the music first and foremost—and it shows here. Keeping a lost art very much alive, the blend of Koerner (12-string guitar, harmonica), Chip Taylor Smith (fiddle, bones, piano) and Jonny Bridgwood (double bass) support Koerner and Smith's vocals as they tour guide the listener through 17 traditional songs, originals and covers—injecting them with as much life as anything deemed more current. A born storyteller, Koerner is clearly a character with much to offer. Standout tracks include his own *Phoebe*, performed solo, as well another original, *Good Time Charlie*, which reveals a full band sound from (only) two acoustic players. *Delia's Gone* is equally animated in its depiction of love gone wrong. Koerner introduces each song—a thoughtful touch. Old-time music this may be but there's no denying it's packed with life and, in Koerner's care, this entire disc is thoroughly entertaining, if not altogether fun to listen to.

— By Eric Gordon Thom



## Breabach

Ùrlar (Breabach Records)

This is Breabach's fourth album and it stems from an interesting idea—to have each band member visit their birthplace as they toured Scotland so they could reconnect people and places that helped shape their music. The outcome is an impressive collection of traditional and contemporary tunes and songs. There's the usual combination of two highland

pipers (Calum MacCrimmon and James Duncan Mackenzie) and a fiddler (Megan Henderson) in the frontline, with excellent vocals from three singers (Henderson, MacCrimmon, and Ewan Robertson). Robertson's guitar and James Lindsay's upright bass create solid grooves and rhythms that hold things together. Kris Drever's production is tasteful and brings out the energy we associate with seeing Breabach live. This is another outstanding release from Scottish Trad Music Award's Folk Band of the Year.

— By Tim Readman

## Capercaillie

*At the Heart of It All* (Vertical Records)

Capercaillie has left a massive footprint on the landscape of Scottish music, both traditional and modern. They have recorded trad Gaelic material, incorporated electronica into their sound and borrowed from pop, funk, rock, and jazz. The idea behind this new CD was to get back to the band's roots. *At the Heart of It All* is mainly an acoustic album with Karen Matheson's sublime vocals at

the forefront. That's not to say it is without its moments of eclecticism as evidenced by some cool jazz-influenced brass licks in places. Stand-out tracks are the Gaelic work song *S'Och A' Dhomhnaill Oig Ghaolaich* and the instrumentals *Jura Wedding Reels* and *Abu Chuibhl' (Spinning Song)*. The latter features a brass arrangement that is one of the highlights of this collection. It's all summed up by the words of the title track, "*At the heart of it all... is a song for the common man... At the heart of it all is a story to be told*".

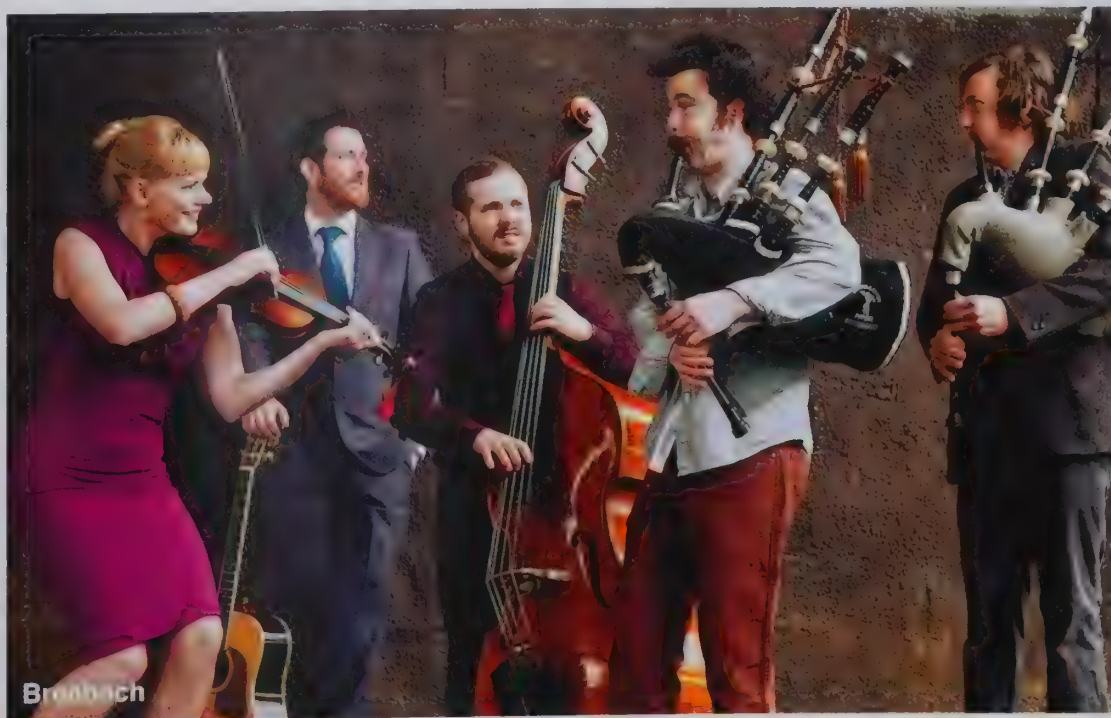
— By Tim Readman

## Meg Hutchinson

*Beyond That* (Red House)

She's built a career, she's won songwriting awards, and now with her ninth release since 1996, Western Massachusetts-born and now Boston-based, singer/songwriter Meg Hutchinson adds another lovely poetic group of songs to her past work.

*Beyond That* uses Meg's gentle, distinctive voice to full potential, immersed and cod-dled in contemporary arrange-





ments where the acoustic instruments mix with synthesized ones and there is not a note out of line.

There is a lovely sense of gentleness and love in the songs, such as this verse in *Nowhere*: “*Today I swam over the coral and I opened up my eyes / saw all the starfish down there holding on so tight / So I opened up my fingers and let the water through / and that’s when I remembered being held by you*”.

Personal and uplifting, *Beyond That* paints hopeful images she gathered along a journey out of depression and, as in David Francey’s latest work along the same theme, such a tip is worth taking with an artist who can transcend the experience.

– By les siemieniuk

## Dan Frechette and Laurel Thomsen

Dan and Laurel (Independent)

Ah, technology and serendipity! In the spring of 2012, Winnipeg singer/songwriter Dan Frechette and California violinist Laurel Thomsen some-

how found each other through the vagaries of the Internet.

They emailed, Facebooked, Skyped and sent each other 35 tunes, overdubbing back and forth. In March 2013, they finally met in person. And in July, this bare-bones debut record of 18 pieces featuring only guitar, violin, and voice was recorded in Winnipeg’s Gordon King Memorial United Church.

It seems a match that was meant to be. Dan is a good songwriter, Lauren a terrific violinist and accompanist, and together their voices blend beautifully and harmonically.

It’s been great to experience the first steps of the duo and I can hardly wait to hear more from them.

– By les siemieniuk

## Paddy Tutty

The Last Holdout (Prairie Druid Music)

Saskatchewan-based Paddy Tutty is a devotee of traditional music. Ancient ballads, story songs, laments, and seasonal songs from, or derived from, Celtic and English music make up

this CD. There’s a couple of Child Ballads (*Kemp Owyne* and *The Famous Flower of Serving Men*), compositions by Peter Bellamy and Peter Boyes of Coope Boyes and Simpson, and a song from Australia. Tutty plays fretted dulcimer, guitar, fiddle, and concertina. The arrangements are sparse with a few unaccompanied songs included. Tutty has a somewhat fragile voice which in places would have benefited from more support. Overall, this is a well-researched and interesting collection.

– By Tim Readman

## Kim Beggs

Beauty and Breaking (Independent)

Kim Beggs is probably more than a little sick and tired of the word being bandied about as a descriptor of her music, but there’s more than a little sweet melancholy threaded through her folk and country musings. It shows up in many ways – the pedal steel quiver ghosting under the vocal in *And Now I’m Running from the River*, violin meanderings in the title track, her own voice on *When I Walked Out On You*. Sweet is the operative word here; there’s never any dark moment that isn’t leavened by both her lovely voice and sense of whimsy. She’s at her best when parsing the personal, as with her tribute to her grandfather, *Chemin de Rondin/Corduroy Road*, even more so when she switches to French. A solid record that grows over time.

– By Tom Murray





## Eric Bibb

Jericho Road (Stony Plain Records)

The simple act of listening to this man's voice as he plies his gospel-tinged blues and gentle folk music is to be deeply soothed. Born of music royalty, the son of Leon Bibb has rested on nobody's laurels – cementing his own reputation with a very personal documentation of music through his own eyes – on what appears to be a relentless schedule. Stripped down and simple is what he does best, presenting his blend of folk and blues with equal parts gospel and soul, yet recent explorations into the depths of his roots, whether they take him deeper down the gospel mine or closer to Mother Africa, have yielded a more complex hybrid – and it all comes together on *Jericho Road*. The initial track, *Drinking Gourd*, pours like a hypnotic, liquid medicine from your speakers while his own (of the 15 tracks here, all but two are originals or co-writes) *Freedom Train* subtly adds vibrant percussion, gentle electric guitar and outspoken, backing vocalists lending it a powerful African energy. With *Let the Mothers Step Up*, Bibb

slides the bar forward with an uplifting, soulful folk-pop highlight, introducing a full band sound with funky background singers (Linda Tillery, Tammi Brown), electric guitar and a powerful chorus for a strong, positive feel that recalls Curtis Mayfield. Press replay. African elements continue the journey on *Have A Heart*, adding hints of kora and strings plus that same irrepressible Mayfield touch, bolstered by a rich bank of backup vocalists, including Ruthie Foster. In other words, Bibb has transitioned away from the lonely blues singer he never really was. His church has grown to reach out to cure the world's ills and his open approach to world music provides a welcome detour, if not enhanced direction, as he continues to bridge multiple musical boundaries with his singular storytelling ability and his distinctively compassionate, self-assured voice. From the hopeful stance of *The Right Thing* with its delicate percussion, African-esque acoustic guitar, colourful bass (Victor Wooten) and Paris Renita's lithe backup vocals to the more familiar, hypnotic charm of



*Death Row Blues* (with tasteful accompaniment from multi-instrumentalist/producer Glen Scott and Grant Dermody's always-haunting harp), Eric Bibb can do no wrong. With the bonus/closing track, *Nanibali*, positioned to underline Bibb's buoyant prayer to "celebrate unity, understanding and love between all members of the global community", he goes further than most to adding illumination to a brighter path worth the taking.

— By Eric Gordon Thom

## Dave Van Ronk

Down In Washington Square: The Smithsonian Folkways Collection (Smithsonian Folkways)

This three-disc treasure is a goldmine for anyone searching for insights into the Greenwich Village music scene and the wild variety of talent it ultimately spawned. The late Dave Van Ronk is – and was – the stuff of legend as this 54-track collection bears out in spades, covering the gruff, yet mercurial man's four decade career. His rich, raspy assault on a mood and a lyric may well be an acquired taste but you'd be hard-pressed to find any artist

fired up with as much passion as this, no matter the era. As a result, his inspirational influence can be heard through time and here's hoping the Coen Brothers newest *Inside Llewyn Davis* – very loosely built upon Van Ronk's memories of the Village era – will add fuel to the fire of his legacy. Far better known for his ability to rework and redefine the acoustic blues of others than for his own compositions, Van Ronk did write, folding his strong personality into elements of folk, traditional jazz, jug band, murder ballads, blues, sea shanties, ragtime, classical music and most things in-between. Treat yourself to his gritty take on *Stackalee*, his 2001 take on Dylan's *Bucket of Rain* (his powerful rasp softened by troubles with the colon cancer which took his life in 2002), Blind Lemon Jefferson's *Please See My Grave Is Kept Clean* and the robust, 'farewell' shanty, *Leave Her, Johnny*. Sturdy originals including *Another Time and Place* and *If You Leave Me*. Pretty Mama lie, seamlessly, with many of his other treatments. A talented fingerpicker, the man who helped jumpstart Bob Dylan





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## Reviews

and one-time merchant seaman was enraptured by classic jazz which forever impacted his phrasing which, combined with his well-read intelligence, helped create a body of work worth marveling at. More neighbourhood guru and touchstone to a who's who of key artists, Van Ronk never reaped the rewards of his reputation, yet there's no stopping you from enjoying the somewhat timeless journey of a larger-than-life character worth knowing better.

— By Eric Gordon Thom

### Poor Angus

Gathering (Fogarty's Cove)

This Hamilton five-piece ply singularly East Coast waters on their third release—echoes of Stan Rogers, The Rankins, and Great Big Sea surface prominently in their sound. A self-described "Celtic band", they open *Gathering* in fine style with Ross Griffiths's highland pipes and a riveting rhythmic foundation. Elsewhere the tunes, mainly original, are sure-

fire winners. The songs are quintessential Canadian-Celtic-singer/songwriter, broadly appealing and tending slightly towards the anthemic (witness this line from *Something I Can't See*: "Lead me to the morning light / Fill me with a sun so bright / So it kills away the darkness of my night"). The one odd inclusion is their take on *Barrett's Privateers*. It's well done and there's no questioning the song's significance but did the world really need another note-for-note version when the original looms so large? Not sure. But that aside, *Gathering* is a strong release that'll surely earn Poor Angus some national attention.

— By Richard Thornley

### Gordie MacKeeman and his Rhythm Boys

Pickin' N Clickin' (Independent)

Fiddler Gordie MacKeeman and his Rhythm Boys of P.E.I. suffer no shortage of talent, it's plain to see. From the relatively narrow niche of Atlantic-infused

country western, they tastefully seep over their borders, annexing bits of jazz, Celtic, bluegrass, and gypsy turf over 14 tracks. MacKeeman's a dab hand on his axe, kicking things off with Lawrence Welk's peppy *Champagne Polka*, which sounds like the exact moment the wedding reception really got fun. Similar smoking instrumentals, including an able-fingered romp through *Old Joe Clark* and the simply pretty shuffle *Wildwood Flower*, proliferate. In between, MacKeeman and guitarist Peter Cann lead the band through various cantors of classic country, from the sombre trot of *There is a Time* to the overdriven gallop of *Scrape the Paint*. I'm prepared to go so far as to say MacKeeman's finger-poppin' *Gonna Get Out* is the best country song I've heard this year. Elsewhere, tunes like *Ragtime Cowboy Joe* give the boys a chance to indulge in the corniness that is also a part of country tradition.

— By Scott Lingley



Poor Angus



## Reviews

### The Strumbellas

We Still Move on Dance Floors

(Six Shooter)

On *Run*, halfway through the Toronto sextet's inaugural release for Six Shooter, head Strumbella Simon Ward exhorts you to come sing along with him. By that time he's already made his point. If there's one thing The Strumbellas seem to want badly from the first notes of *We Still Move on Dance Floors* it's for you to come sing along. Why else would they repeat their seemingly bottomless supply of hooky refrains so much other than to join in on their jaunty folk-pop jamboree, which is, all the same, tinged with the melancholy of knowing our time together is short? Just 30 minutes is all it takes for the band to wedge nine catchy songs into your head. Isabel Ritchie's violin and the gang vocals, ladled with reverb, are key to the mood of the thing, embellishing the reliable momentum of the group as a unit. Comparisons are odious but if The Lumi-

neers would persuade you to give The Strumbellas a try, so be it. The exultant album opener *Sailing* should pull you in.

— By Scott Lingley

### Daddy Long Legs

The Devil's In The Details

(Busted Flat Records)

You might wonder why Waterloo, ON, plays home to high calibre, juke joint-grade blues. But Daddy Long Legs have been grinding out their bar-room-born authentic blues since 2001. Five albums on, they've accomplished more than even they've expected — not only keeping the original band intact, garnering multiple awards along the way, but developing a solid sound to call their own. Devil in the Details captures the past yet grafts its slightly retro sound to the future, snarling with attitude as their deep, greasy grooves beg extended jams — their secret weapon. The heart their sound is found in Chris Malleck's exceptional harp skills, Mike Elliott's convincing vocal

snarl and lethal guitar edge together with the crack rhythm section of bassist Steve Toms and drummer Jeff Wagner — capable of pumping gas onto any slow burn. Sitting atop a beefy collection of roof-raising originals, the best tracks are often the slower numbers. A case-in-point is "Lonely" — a showcase for Malleck's harp and Elliott's ability to sell a song. As they speed things up, they houserock hard, adding elements of swing, rockabilly and rock'n'roll at will. The hardcore pace of the blistering "Borrowed Time" struts this workingman's band's strengths within an inch of their lives. The comparably relaxed four-minute *Easy For Me* acts as a tease leaving the listener begging for more. You Wonder announces a solid sound that only grows from confidence, leaving the audience wanting, once again: more. It's a strategy that, like their namesake, has legs — long ones.

— By Eric Gordon Thom



The Strumbellas

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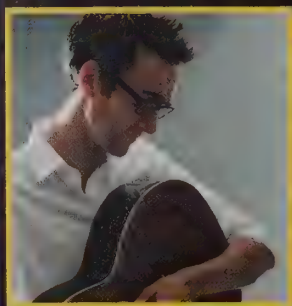


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## The Cumberland Brothers

Gamey E.P. (Independent)

## Finnders & Youngberg

I Don't Want Love You Can't Give Until I Cry

(Swingfingers Records)

I've never quite understood why artists create extended plays, or EPs. They always seem unfinished to me. And with all that money going into art and manufacturing, why not record enough tracks to have a full disc?

That said, there's a couple of EPs worth noting, even if they leave you feeling half-satisfied.

The Cumberland Brothers of Cumberland, BC, is a new old-time/bluegrass project of multi-instrumentalist Archie Pateman, a founding member of The Breakmen, with fiddler Jack Roland. They do show flashes of sounding like brothers, as in Louvin Brothers, although there are no Louvin tracks among the eight. However there are tracks by the Bros. Delmore and Kershaw, as well as some fine hurtin' songs by Pateman.

Speaking of hurtin' songs, Finnders and Youngberg, a quintet from Colorado, have also produced a fine, if undersize, collection of acoustic heartbreak songs. From the lonely waitress at *The Diner* to the realization of a colossal mistake committed through *Infidelity*, the heartstrings are tugged. They are all fine pickers, and pedal steel guitar adds to the crying. My favourite is the title track, sung beautifully by Erin Youngberg and

backed by a chamber-type string arrangement by the band's fiddler, Ryan Dickey.

Mighty fine music, indeed, by both groups, but we want more. At least a dozen tracks. Please.

— By Mike Sadava

## Josienne Clarke and Ben Walker

Fire & Fortune (Navigator Records)

This is a pretty record. The centrepiece is Clarke's sweet voice mainly accompanied by Walker's nimble and melodic guitar playing. They co-write the songs and also arrange some trad material, too. The title track is striking, with a heavy beat with multi-layered harmonies skating over the top. This is a pretty deceptive record. With each listen a slightly sinister feeling starts to emerge as lyrics like "*How dare you love anyone but me?*" and "*You traitor what have you done to me?*" start to penetrate your consciousness.

There's plenty to reward

repeated listening ... and some Internet investigations here. There is a pretty disturbing video for the title track online, which features a sinister plot involving kidnapping and self-immolation.

Not quite what I would expect from first listen! Strings, percussion, keyboards, woodwinds, and bass float in and out and provide colour and subtle underpinning to the duo's work. This is a pretty damn good record.

— By Tim Readman

## Tift Merritt

Traveling Alone (Yep Roc Records)

The opening lines of Tift Merritt's song *Sweet Spot* could apply to the method taken for the whole disc and indeed her entire career: "*Nothing fancy, nothing fake / Nothing wasted and no deal to make*". For this, her fifth studio disc (she also has two live albums and a couple of EPs to her credit), Merritt does what she has always done: written good, solid songs, played and sang them with



Tift Merritt



honest feeling, and surrounded herself with strong musicians who are able to interpret them well. They're basic country/folk with a tinge of rock. That this may be her best disc yet is due simply to experience and the accumulation of craft, though it probably helps to have players of the calibre of Marc Ribot, master of atmospheric guitar, and John Convertino, drummer for Calexico, on this recording, along with several other fine musicians. The songs are basic but have the feeling and absence of cliché that makes an artist memorable. If you've never experienced Tift Merritt yet, check this one out.

— By Barry Hammond

## Missy Raines and The New Hip

New Frontier (Compass)

I must say I wasn't aware of Missy Raines before this. But I learned she's a pretty good bass player. Seven times an International Bluegrass Music Association award winner on the instrument. And since 2009 she's been with the New Hip.

Well, is it new, is it hip? I don't know but what it is is pretty good. It is a nice mix of styles from the traditional to the newgrass to a light touch of the jazz. As with most bluegrass-trained musicians, the playing is dead on, and the vocals tight and polished. A lovely collection of songs, especially one called *American Crow*, which paints an eerie, haunting picture that is crystal clear yet beautifully vague at the same time.

*"Black feather hollow bones / nowhere left for the light to go / sittin' on a fence post on the side of the road / American Crow"*

*New Frontier* is contemporary, polished, and a terrific listening experience that pays



homage to and includes various parts of American roots music, yet stands on its own as a lovely and unique piece of work

— By les siemieniuk

## The Civil Wars

The Civil Wars (Sony)

It's hard to tell what's up with these inscrutable folkies, who seem to have been jarred by sudden fame (and Grammy wins) into bad relations and extended hiatus. Sad, really, since unlike many other artists who are picked up and carried around like prize show dogs, The Civil Wars actually justify both the hype and the mystery. There's lots of mystery to be found in the lovely *Same Old Same Old*, a breakup song with a sting, and the *Devil's Backbone*, which shifts gears from Appalachia to a hint of rock bombast. The album has its flaws, including a few idlers like *Oh Henry*, but even these are strengthened by the odd, sizzling chemistry between singers Joy Williams and John Paul White. Hopefully not their ultimate album, because it clearly doesn't show them at the top of their game, but for now we'll have to assume it is.

— By Tom Murray

## Pat LePoidevein

American Fiction (Independent)

Since 2007, from Princeton, BC, to Sackville, NB, Pat LePoidevein has successfully carried his guitar, ukulele, loops, pedals and songs around Canada for three albums. On *American Fiction*, his fourth, he explores his American roots having been born a dual citizen through his father. LePoidevein enlisted writing help from his best friend, Lewis Smith. Together, *The American Fictions* they present are 10 stories titled after backwater towns in the U.S.A., from Caliente, CA, to Twilight Park, NY, with stops in Florida, Idaho, and Montana, amongst others.

Musically presented in lovely indie-folk arrangements, at times reminiscent of The Weakerthans' gentler side. The songs are lyrically strong and present poignant and striking images of life on the blue highways. Apparently there was an accompanying book of short stories done by Smith, that is apparently available with the CD. I can say the musical experience provided by Pat and his cohorts was satisfying enough. It's a lovely themed project and a terrific work of art and craft.

— By les siemieniuk

## Brian Miller and Randy Gosa

The Falling of the Pine (Independent)

This is the followup to Miller's fine *Minnesota Lumberjack Songs* of 2011.

When I interviewed him for *Penguin Eggs* at that time he told me, "I have had such a positive response and had such a lot of fun playing the music that I definitely will be keeping it going!" Well he is true to his word. This is another great collection and this time he shares the billing with his musical sidekick, guitarist/mandolinist Randy Gosa.

There's a very informative and well-written booklet which accompanies the disc and gives the background and history of each piece. The material comes from Southern Ontario, Michigan, the Ottawa Valley, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota but all of it reaches back at some point to the Old Sod, be that England, Ireland, or Scotland.

These are working songs of farming, logging, prison, sailing, sport, and warfare, all played and sung with verve and feeling. Another winner from the lumberjacking Shanty Boys!

— By Tim Readman



## Books

### King Of Rags

By Eric Bronson

ISBN: 9780988829008 / Neverland Publishing Company/193 pages/paperback/\$16.95

Unconventional is the word that describes both the life of Scott Joplin, the man who is generally credited as the prime composer of ragtime music, and this biographical novel of his life by Eric Bronson. This avoidance of convention perhaps isn't surprising in an artist who establishes an original art form but might be less expected in an academic biographer.

Bronson has credits as a visiting professor in the Humanities Department at York University in Toronto but has edited books including *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo and Philosophy* (2011), *Poker and Philosophy*

(2006), *Baseball and Philosophy* (2004)... He also has a life as a filmmaker, producing, co-editing, and appearing in *My Lazy White Friends* (1998).

Joplin published his first rag, *The Original Rags*, in 1897, and his breakthrough work *Maple Leaf Rag* in 1899. Ragtime is considered a precursor of jazz, in that it fuses elements of European Classical music with John Philip Sousa marches and African-American syncopation. Even prior to that, Joplin was at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893, which several sources credit as the source of the ragtime craze. The hit 1973 movie *The Sting*, with Robert Redford and Paul Newman, used Joplin's rags, especially *The Entertainer*, lightly revised by composer Marvin Hamlisch, and it became a hit once again.



Scott Joplin

The novel covers various aspects of Scott Joplin's life: the historic meeting and contract with music publisher John Stark, his early years, the locations and milieu in which he worked, his dealings with other black musicians, the dual influences of his teacher, Julius

Weiss, and of pioneering black rights defender Frederick Douglass, his formality and stiffness, the work on his operas, and much else, including the causes of the First World War.

First and foremost, it depicts the struggle between art and ideals and entertainment and commerce which most fine artists have to balance. This is the area Bronson really excels at and the speeches he puts in the mouths of his characters and their letters ring true to the settings and time period. It's perhaps too short a book to be definitive of the subject and leaves a few things out but what is there is brought vividly to life with sensitivity, insight, and style. A fine read for anyone interested in the history of black music and jazz in particular.

— By Barry Hammond

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## Festival Man

By Geoff Berner

ISBN: 9781459707245 / Dundurn Press / 157 pages /

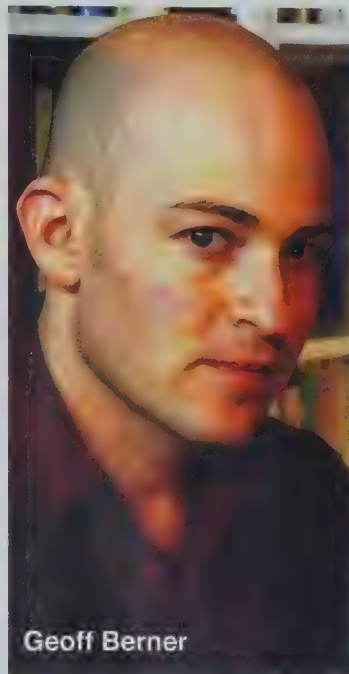
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Campbell Ouiniette, the main character in Geoff Berner's first novel, reminds the reader of what British actors playing the villain in American movies always say: "He doesn't think of himself as the villain".

Ouiniette is a Canadian band manager and promoter who starts out in punk rock and gradually drifts into the world of folk festivals. He has plenty of rationalizations to excuse his invariably bad behaviour. He's the guy who always knows what's best for everyone. That it generally benefits himself to the exclusion of all others is a minor point as far as he's concerned. He even admits early in his confessional setting-the-record-straight account that he became his first band's manager because he "would always come up with a strong opinion," and was "the only person in the room who could forcefully state he Knew What To Do". Whether these opinions and actions were even remotely helpful didn't seem to concern anyone, least of all him.

His story is the rambling account of his actions during a weekend at the Calgary Folk Festival (during which he has to disguise the fact that his main stage act hasn't shown up) with digressions on a tour of Yugoslavia/Bosnia and remembrances of his past that seem relevant to events.

Berner has a background as a punk/klezmer accordionist and so his knowledge of the behind-the-scenes atmosphere at these kinds of events is extensive and laser-accurate. He's created a hilarious book in which laughter and outrage mix in equal parts to paint a portrait of mayhem in the Canadian



folk world that the reader won't soon forget. His prose is both tight and brilliantly evocative. A few of his many targets are Australians, sound men, Blue Rodeo, Sara McLachlan, and Stan Rogers's widow. You might cringe but you'll also recognize the truth of his most slanderous observations. It's a wicked bullseye of a book.

— By Barry Hammond



## Bruce Cockburn

Pacing The Cage DVD (True North Records)

True North Records' Bernie Finkelstein produced this documentary, co-produced, written and directed by Joel Goldberg. It's a long-overdue appreciation of Cockburn's music with prominent Cockburn fans like Bono, professor of theology Dr. Brian Walsch, William Paul Young (author of *The Shack*), producer and guitarist Colin Linden, Jackson Browne, Michael Ondaatje, activist Bob Lovelace, Romeo Dallaire, and Sylvia Tyson contributing interview segments, intercut with live music and clips of Bruce Cockburn, himself, talking

about his music. There's a mix of colour and black & white HD footage and hand-held 8mm shots, which give it a nice variety of looks and textures.

Cockburn has been labelled both The Bob Dylan of Canada and The John Denver of Canada and both titles apply to a degree. The film is divided into seven chapters, each covering different aspects of his work, with titles like: *On the Road*, *Guitar Player*, *The Activist*, and *The Writer*. Most of his major songs (like *Lovers In A Dangerous Time*, *Wondering Where The Lions Are*, *If I Had a Rocket Launcher*, and *If a Tree Falls*) are represented in the live footage. It's basically just an introduction and a quick taste of the artist and is just as revealing in what it doesn't talk about as to what it does. At a compact one hour and five minutes, it definitely leaves the viewer wanting more. Although it gives some insight into the music and man, there's no biographical information to speak of. We see him walking with and sitting with a young blonde girl who remains totally mute. There's brief talk of a disastrous marriage, one mention of a daughter and that's it. There aren't even any extras. Someone should do a more in-depth look at the life and career of this major figure.

— By Barry Hammond

Continued from page 43

homegrown P.E.I. pop tune, *Heroes of the Sidewalk* by Two Hours Traffic.

"They're good buddies of ours so we were happy to put that song on the album."

The album is produced by Nathan Wiley, mixed by Dale Murray (Cuff The Duke, Christina Martin) and features

several musical friends from P.E.I. The 14 tracks roll from straight-up fiddle tunes (*Cham-pagne Polka*, *Old Joe Clark*, *Black Velvet Waltz*) to novelty tunes (*Ragtime Cowboy Joe*) and some fine originals (*Gonna Get Out*, *Hay Boys*, and *Scrape The Paint*).

"We tried to take a lot of stuff from our live show for the album," says MacKeeman. "In fact, we wanted to make the sound of the record a kind of representation of our live show. When people leave the show and buy a CD, they can feel that same (energy)."

The young four-piece group is accustomed now to piling into a rented van rolling from one town to the next. It's old-time touring.

"That's fine with us," says MacKeeman. "We just love to play. We're mainly a live band and put a lot of work into our live show."

Last year, the band's high-octane live show scored the Galaxy Supernova Award at the 2012 Ottawa Folk Festival. MacKeeman puts his early-learned clogging to work in the live show, all knees and feet flying in time to the driving rhythms. He's not averse to hopping up on the prone bass fiddle for a little extra razzle dazzle during his solos.

This year has been busy for the band, as they carve out a living while still based in Charlottetown. They toured hard through Western Canada in the late fall of 2013, capping a year highlighted by three trips to the U.K., including a performance at the famed Glastonbury Festival, the largest outdoor music festival in the world.

"That was something to experience," says MacKeeman. "There were more people there than on all of P.E.I."

— By Sandy MacDonald



"Penguin Eggs is profound, and analytical, and contextual, and fun. It's really great," – Shelagh Rogers, CBC Radio (*The Next Chapter*)

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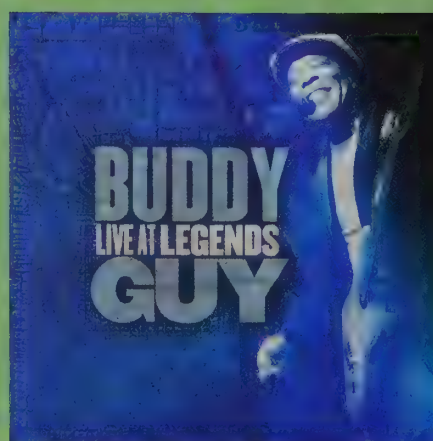
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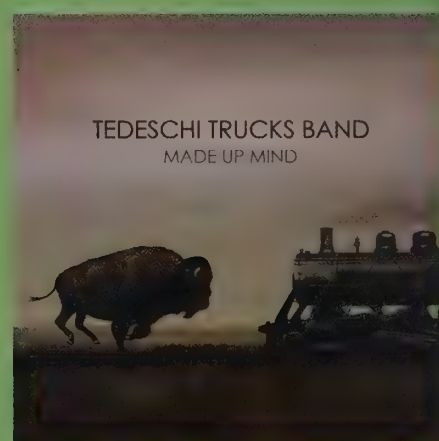
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# Muses et cornemuses

**Carlos Núñez joue de la gaïta traditionnelle galicienne – la guitare électrique du Moyen Âge. Il explique à Roger Lévesque à quel point la ligne est mince entre la technique musicale et la sorcellerie.**

Parmi les rencontres stimulantes qu'il nous a été possible de faire lors des éditions récentes du Edmonton Folk Music Festival, Carlos Núñez, vedette de la cornemuse en Galicie, est certainement une des plus mémorables.

Bien qu'ayant depuis longtemps acquis la réputation internationale d'être le « Hendrix de la cornemuse », après avoir assisté à deux prestations d'après-midi de Núñez et de son quatuor, il devient clair que l'artiste possède plus d'une corde à son arc et qu'il parvient à nous procurer une expérience musicale des plus complètes.

En plus de maîtriser totalement la gaïta (cornemuse galicienne), les flûtes et les sifflots, il se retourne souvent lors du spectacle pour faire face à ses musiciens (incluant son frère, le percussionniste Xurxo Núñez) afin de diriger légèrement la spontanéité et le dynamisme du groupe. Le programme offert, mesuré avec expertise, comprend notamment une version extraordinaire du *Boléro* de Ravel et est soutenu par le charisme indéniable de Núñez ainsi que par une énergie contagieuse sachant maintenir les auditeurs sur le bout de leur siège.

Quelques instants plus tard, au bout de la longue file indienne de nouveaux admirateurs attendant pour un autographe (des femmes pour la plupart, dont plusieurs s'extasiaient comme quoi ce fut une des meilleures musiques qu'elles n'avaient jamais entendues), on pouvait apercevoir une étincelle dans les yeux de Núñez. Dans l'entrevue donnée juste après la séance d'autographes, il s'est dit prêt à admettre que la ligne est mince entre la technique musicale et la sorcellerie.

« Avec la cornemuse, il faut parfois essayer d'être un magicien et faire croire qu'il y a deux mélodies de jouées en même temps. Voilà le travail du vrai illusionniste, celui de savoir dès le départ les gammes ou les effets particuliers qui sauront mettre les gens dans une atmosphère toute spéciale. »

Quelques minutes de conversation suffisent pour réaliser à quel point l'homme est également un érudit, un musicologue encyclopédique sachant décortiquer les



acoustiques ancestrales. Avec enthousiasme, il nous explique comment celles-ci réunissent l'Ancien Monde et celui des Amériques dans chacun des phrasés musicaux qu'il exécute.

« Lorsqu'on travaille avec la musique traditionnelle, tout devient en connexion avec la musique mère, avec quelque chose de préexistant. Le mot "composition" vient de compositio, c'est-à-dire mettre ensemble des choses qui existent déjà au préalable. Parfois si vous vous dites : "J'ai déjà entendu cette mélodie auparavant", c'est parce que des parcelles de cette mélodie faisaient déjà partie de votre imagination. »

Puis, Núñez retrace les anciennes connexions celtiques de la gaïta, revient sur son parcours : de la Galicie (province au nord-ouest de l'Espagne) jusqu'en Écosse et en Irlande, puis revenant en Galicie jusqu'en Amérique Latine. Il nous explique également les différences entre la gaïta et les autres types de cornemuses.

« Au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, les Écossais ont transformé la gaïta en un autre instrument, la cornemuse écossaise, parce qu'ils voulaient un instrument plus puissant pouvant se jouer à plusieurs en même temps, faire un grand groupe de cornemuses. Ils ont donc abandonné les particularités individuelles que la vieille gaïta avait, comme le vibrato, les notes gracieuses et la pratique de l'improvisation, en plus des gammes mineures et chromatiques. Ils ont perdu plusieurs

possibilités musicales, mais ils en ont fait un son qui était très, très puissant. Je crois donc que la gaïta est plutôt un instrument pour soliste. Aussi, d'une certaine manière, la gaïta fut la guitare électrique du Moyen Âge, car elle a été à la mode partout à travers l'Europe. »

La relation de Núñez avec la gaïta a commencé par osmose en se développant à travers la musique traditionnelle à Vigo, principale ville portuaire et centre culturel de la côte du nord-ouest de l'Espagne. Il a débuté par des leçons à 8 ans pour ensuite aller étudier la flûte à bec au Conservatoire Royal de Madrid. Aujourd'hui, il perçoit les musiques folk et classiques comme étant des « traditions parallèles ».

Pendant des décennies, des facettes de la culture traditionnelle galicienne ont été ostracisées par le régime dictatorial de Francisco Franco. L'Espagne n'était reconnue que pour son flamenco. Puis, suite à la mort de Franco en 1975, la Galicie a connu une renaissance culturelle et la cornemuse fut employée pour aider à faire redécouvrir la musique galicienne au mode entier.

Le moment le plus marquant à survenir lors des années de développement de Núñez a été la rencontre avec The Chieftains lors d'un festival de musique celtique en Bretagne alors qu'il avait 13 ans. À 18 ans, le groupe l'invita à l'accompagner sur la trame sonore du film *l'Île au Trésor*, projet au cours duquel il fit des apprentissages



uniques. Il fit avec eux pendant plusieurs années des tournées internationales, ce qui lui valut le sobriquet de « septième Chieftain », apprenant des trucs du métier qu'il utilisera pour lancer sa propre carrière solo (il est présent sur quelques albums, incluant *Santiago*, gagnant d'un Grammy).

« La meilleure chose que Paddy Moloney m'a suggérée a été : "Carlos, pourquoi ne fais-tu pas un mélange entre le flamenco et la musique d'Amérique latine?" Il faut que je le remercie pour ça. »

Malgré les avertissements de plusieurs, Núñez est devenu la première personne à jumeler les traditions de la musique du Nord et du Sud de l'Espagne. « Les gens disaient : "Tu joues du flamenco, le diable, l'ennemi!", mais nous avons des choses en commun. J'ai fait des albums avec de grands maîtres du flamenco et j'ai découvert à quel point la musique galicienne avait des connexions avec la musique celtique (par l'Atlantique). Ça avait quelque chose de fantastique de faire jouer du flamenco à des musiciens d'Irlande et d'Écosse. C'était incroyable! Et la racine commune dans tout ça, c'était la Galicie. »

Dès le départ, Núñez avait une vision qu'on qualifiera d'éclectique. En 1996, pour son premier album solo *Brotherhood Of Stars*, il invite une douzaine de collaborateurs, dont The Chieftains, Sinéad O'Connor et Ry Cooder. Le disque devient alors le premier album à sonorités celtiques à atteindre le statut « platine » en Espagne.

Depuis lors, il a fait paraître une douzaine d'albums (parmi lesquels des trames sonores et des concerts en direct), creusant toujours plus profond dans ses racines musicales et collaborant avec le maître de la musique médiévale espagnole Jorde Savalle, ou en développant de nouvelles amitiés à travers le monde avec des artistes provenant de tous les horizons, jusqu'au pop ou à l'avant-garde.

La meilleure manière de plonger dans l'œuvre de Núñez est très certainement de commencer par l'album *Discover* (2012), une anthologie de 2 disques revenant sur son travail fait avec l'étiquette Sony Masterworks. D'une ampleur ahurissante, l'anthologie inclut quelques-unes de ses plus anciennes collaborations avec The Chieftains ou avec d'autres grands noms tels Mike Scott (The Waterboys), Jackson Browne et Sharon Shannon, ainsi que plusieurs membres du Buena Vista Social Club (Carlinhos Brown, Hector Zazou, Ryuichi Sakamoto et Laurie Anderson, pour ne nommer que ceux-là).

Núñez avoue aimer avoir plusieurs projets en cours avant d'enregistrer : « Vous avez les tomates, les oranges et les raisins, et

la nature décide lesquels sont mûrs en premier. »

Peut-être une partie de son génie procède-t-elle de son habileté à faire de la musique dont on sent les origines ancestrales, mais que l'on ressent en même temps éternelle et liée à des explorations plus contemporaines. Cela nous rappelle que certains éléments de la musique comme l'improvisation sont aussi vieux que la civilisation elle-même.

Il semble particulièrement heureux de sa première tournée des festivals canadiens : « Ça a été tellement plaisant. Ça m'a rappelé quelque chose que j'avais constaté il y a longtemps, alors que je jouais avec The Chieftains, que la musique traditionnelle est ici pour tout le monde et qu'elle ne divise pas les gens entre jeunes et vieux. Ça nous donne vraiment l'impression qu'une nouvelle génération est fin prête à aller de l'avant. »

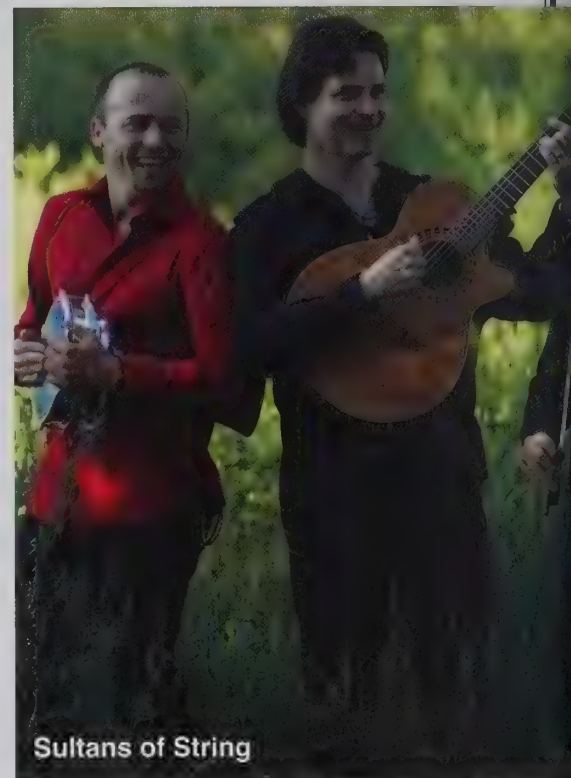
## McKhool sait comment s'entourer

**Chris McKhool et le groupe primé Sultans Of Strings font swinguer leur musique du monde instrumentale. Pour leur plus récent disque intitulé *Symphony!*, ils ont invité Paddy Moloney du groupe The Chieftains ainsi que les chanteurs de Dala. Roger Lévesque a prêté l'oreille.**

Comment parvenir à la fluidité dans une musique fusion mondiale? Sultans Of String en concert vous en donnera une bonne idée.

Le groupe passe de rythmiques arabes au jazz manouche sans problèmes, puis à quelque chose de plus éthéré, d'une veine plus celtique, puis aux rythmes latins, à la base de leur musique. Mais la véritable prouesse relève de la douceur avec laquelle ils accomplissent ces transitions, ces solos, le tout avec un synchronisme sachant garder un auditoire attentif.

La composition même du groupe de Toronto semble couler de source. Il y a un peu plus de 10 ans, les Sultans ont pris forme à partir d'un duo (le violoniste Chris McKhool et le guitariste Kevin Laliberté), puis ils ont grandi et ont développé des sons et des champs d'influences plus grands



Sultans of String

qu'ils n'eurent pu l'imaginer au départ, atteignant bientôt 5 musiciens et plusieurs invités occasionnels. Aujourd'hui, c'est des orchestres qui collaborent avec eux, sur scène comme sur leur plus récent et quatrième opus, *Symphony!* Chose certaine, peu importe le contexte, ils ont su conserver cette spontanéité qui rend les choses excitantes.

McKhool, le leader du groupe, est heureux de la tournure des événements : « Une des choses que j'aime à propos de ce groupe, c'est sa polyvalence et la manière dont il parvient à se sentir chez lui dans une boîte de jazz comme dans un festival de musique folk. J'ai adoré l'ajout d'une symphonie classique à l'ensemble. Bien que ce ne soit pas de la musique classique, cela nous aide à rejoindre de nouveaux auditoires et c'est attrayant pour les gens d'entendre ce genre de rythmiques avec un orchestre. Je suis convaincu que ce disque a le potentiel de nous ouvrir des portes. »

Paddy Maloney, le célèbre joueur de cornemuse des Chieftains, fait une brève apparition sur la pièce *Sable Island* et se joint à une liste d'invités incluant les voix de Dala (Amanda Walther, Sheila Carabine) et le virtuose palestinien du oud, Bassam Bishara. *Symphony!* a été sélectionné par la faction Red de Sony Music pour la distribution aux États-Unis et le groupe fera environ une douzaine de prestations cette année avec divers orchestres.

Tout cela représente pour McKhool un nouveau sommet dans une carrière pleine de rebondissements. Ayant grandi à Ottawa, il cumule quelques expériences musicales





jusqu'à l'école secondaire, mais c'est en psychologie qu'il obtient son diplôme universitaire avant de retomber dans la musique quelque peu par accident.

Avant la fin de ses études à l'Université McGill en 1990, McKhool apprend qu'il a la fibromyalgie. Comme il lutte pour contrôler les effets de la maladie, un travail dans une garderie lui permet de joindre les deux bouts. Puis, lorsque son patron constate son talent pour éveiller les enfants à la musique, il lui propose de faire ça à temps plein. Une fois guéri, McKhool fera 4 albums solos pour jeunes auditoires (les ateliers pour jeunes qu'organisent les Sultans perpétuent cette facette de son métier 20 ans plus tard).

En cours de route, il commence à explorer des techniques traditionnelles de violon ainsi que les racines musicales libanaises de son ancêtre paternel. Cela l'aide à prendre des leçons de musique arabe du Palestino-Canadien Bassam Bashira, qui jouera du oud sur trois de ses albums, incluant *Symphony!*. Le violoniste est un musicien relativement inconnu de la scène torontoise lorsqu'il y rencontre Laliberté en 2002. Le guitariste, alors à mi-chemin de sa collaboration de 5 ans avec le groupe de Jesse Cook, inspira McKhool par sa maîtrise de la rumba-flamenco et très rapidement ils eurent un engagement hebdomadaire dans un club et une chance d'explorer plus avant les possibilités et les formes de leurs nouvelles compositions.

« À l'époque où nous avons commencé comme duo, il nous aurait semblé impossible d'obtenir les opportunités qui

nous sont offertes aujourd'hui. J'essaie de demeurer conscient qu'il faut garder l'esprit ouvert à toute nouvelle collaboration et à tout nouveau genre de musique. Avoir un invité spécial est une manière pour nous d'apprendre sur un style particulier avec lequel nous ne sommes pas familiers et avec lequel nous pourrions continuer à nous améliorer. » Bien que McKhool et Laliberté soient encore les principaux compositeurs, la croissance pour le moins organique du groupe se reflète notamment par les arrangements, composés par la contribution démocratique de tout un chacun.

Le bassiste Drew Birston s'est joint au duo pour étoffer les prestations extérieures et était déjà un membre permanent de la formation lorsque les Sultans ont enregistré leur premier CD, *Luna*, en 2007. L'addition du percussionniste Rosendo (Chendy) Leon et d'un deuxième guitariste, Eddie Paton, a rehaussé davantage le son du groupe : « Quand Chendy s'est joint au groupe, il a travaillé aux arrangements avec nous et les chansons ont pu être finalisées complètement avant de rentrer en studio. Il est un maître de toutes les percussions, quelles qu'elles soient. Eddie a lui aussi apporté de bonnes idées pour l'album. Drew provenait des milieux jazz et pop et Kevin versait plutôt dans le jazz bebop, mais pouvait agripper une Stratocaster et jouer de solos de rock classique. Nous venons tous de milieux différents et tout le monde apporte des singularités qui, à la fin, sont très complémentaires. »

Présentant quelques chansons datant des premiers balbutiements du groupe, *Luna* a été salué par la critique et leur a valu une première tournée pancanadienne en 2009. C'est cependant avec leur troisième album, *Yalla Yalla* (2009) qu'ils ont véritablement établi leur réputation, recueillant au passage une nomination aux Juno ainsi que le prix du groupe instrumental de l'année aux Canadian Folk Music Awards. Puis, de nouveaux instruments ont ouvert d'autres possibilités pour ces improvisateurs hors pair.

En 2009, McKhool décide d'apprendre à jouer d'un violon électro-acoustique à six cordes, ce qui lui permet d'atteindre des notes plus basses que sur un alto. Pendant ce temps, Laliberté adopte une guitare électrique faite sur mesure en fibre de carbone et utilise des pédales d'effets et des technologies « loop » afin de créer ses propres sonorités.

Le héros obscur des sessions d'enregistrement de *Symphony!* est certainement l'arrangeuse Rebecca Pellett. Elle a été chercher la moitié des pistes dans du répertoire plus ancien en les mixant avec de nou-

veaux airs comme pour *Monti's Revenge* (influencé d'une traditionnelle hongroise), la latine *Palmas Sinfonia* ainsi que *A Place to Call Home* (de Laliberté). Mieux que cela, elle est même arrivée à mener à bien la lourde tâche de faire swinguer l'orchestre.

« Elle peut vraiment nous dire exactement ce qu'elle entend dans sa tête et comment elle veut que ça se développe. J'ai voulu que l'orchestre ait également son mot à dire dans le processus. Le défi vient du fait que nous jouons la musique avec des rythmes qui groovent, l'orchestre n'étant pas trop habitué à ça. Ils semblent comprendre ça plutôt bien, même s'il y a parfois quelques réticences. Pour nous aussi, c'est différent parce que la forme est très figée. Il faut savoir la longueur exacte de nos solos parce que l'orchestre est toujours très précis. »

McKhool croit qu'il n'y a aucune raison de penser que cette diversité stylistique ne continuera pas dans les années à venir. « Il y a tellement d'idées que je voudrais tenter. J'aime aussi toujours expérimenter en duo.

## Ross Ainslie et Jarlath Henderson

Air-Fix ROSS (Great White Records)

Prenez deux grands cornemuseurs, l'un d'Écosse et l'autre d'Irlande, mettez-les dans un studio en compagnie de quelques autres grands instrumentistes et qu'obtiendrez-vous? La réponse en ce cas-ci : de la pure magie. Voilà un CD merveilleusement produit et enlevant du début à la fin. Ross Ainslie (cornemuse écossaise, sifflets) et Jarlath Anderson (cornemuse d'ullean, sifflets) sont rejoints par Ali Hutton à la guitare, James Watson au violon, Hamish Napier aux claviers, Alana Henderson à la voix et par une section rythmique constituée de Duncan Lyall à la basse et James Mackintosh à la batterie. Il se peut que vous ayez déjà entendu Ainslie avec Salsa Celtica, ou Henderson avec Capercaillie, mais je doute que vous ayez entendu quelque chose comme ça auparavant. De toutes les musiques qui prétendent repousser les limites de leur genre, peu y parviennent réellement, mais cet ensemble (de toute évidence) y parvient. Les pistes qui se démarquent sont l'exubérante et très branchée Honk, incluant une superbe intro de violon de Watson (comme si The Average White Band rencontrait Moving Hearts) ainsi que Anyone, absolument magnifique et chantée de façon magistrale par les deux Henderson. Même la pochette est remarquable, avec les deux cornemuseurs représentés en modèles réduits (comme des avions Air-fix). Il faut se le procurer!

— Par Tim Readman»





Tony Montague

**Tony Montague ponders the value of musical tags and terms and finds most lacking, some even unstable.**

The rains sweep in and the cold starts to pinch. Time to stay home, juggle with some words and terms again, play with a few musical and historical imponderables.

“What’s in a name?” as the girlfriend of one of my distant ancestors once asked. She added that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet. But it’s more complicated than that. Rightly or wrongly, names of all sorts carry associations, and used as tags in contemporary music they tend to be unstable.

Take folk. It can refer to quite radically different things to different people, it’s imperceptibly changing shape and meaning all the time, and is currently branching into more sub-genres than ever.

Before the First World War, it basically meant traditional music of the common people, as distinct from the middle and upper classes (though there was more cross-over than anyone admitted). But that begs the question of what’s traditional in the first place. Much of what gets called trad is, and was, new music, written in a similar vein.

It became traditional when other singers spread the songs and tunes and edited them.

Fast forward to the coming of records and radio stations, and a few of the late carriers of this old folk music, the likes of Lead Belly and Woody Guthrie, are also drawing from the collective source to create songs, and are able to reach a much larger audience. By the time Bob Dylan comes along

and folk reaches its peak of popularity it’s already fragmenting.

The word naturally migrated with him to embrace contemporary popular music to rock. Now it’s used as a descriptive of pretty much any song with mainly acoustic arrangements and accompaniment. While it’s nice to see how large the family has grown, folk on its own has become overstretched and hollowed out as a term. And in some respects, such as image, it’s tended to become its own worst enemy.

The more recent arrival of a flock of new hyphens can be helpful as a rough guide to trends. Whether prefixed like techno-folk, freak-folk, progressive-folk, psychedelic-folk, neo-folk or suffixed like folk-rock, folk-jazz, and folk-punk—you get an idea of the terrain, or should do. The most important thing is to see and use emerging new terms as signposts, and to avoid defining, confining, or consigning with them.

As far as most musicians, of course, are concerned there’s just music—or Ellington’s division into the good and the bad (and today, the ugly). Much great music rightly challenges the whole idea of genre or style-naming. How, for instance, can you easily tag Aoife O’Donovan’s brilliant solo debut *Fossils* when there are elements of many genres—folk, country, gospel, jazz, oldtime, bluegrass, rock, and pop.

Names in music sometimes carry cultural biases. ‘World music’ seems distinctly wobbly. For most people, especially English-speakers, it applies to music of other nations rather than their own—despite multiculturalism.

Roots music seems a better term, coupled with an initial adjective, like Appalachian, Angolan, or Andalucian—and maybe a hyphen. The jury’s still out on Cajun roots-noir.

All the national music biz ‘-ana’ suffixes are troubling, with Americana the biggest and the most dubious. It clearly doesn’t embrace things like delta blues or zydeco, just their influence, at times. Yet both are quintessentially stamped ‘Made in America’. The name as used by the industry rather than the Smithsonian Institution smells suspiciously of musical whitewash. Most of the time, Americana is synonymous with some variant of alt-country or contemporary folk.

And the notion of Canadiana in music is

offensive unless it includes songs in French and other languages—made in Canada.

But what if we thought instead in terms of North Americana, and ignored the borders of the U.S.? The field becomes larger, richer, more interesting and more comprehensible. We’d need to include Mexican traditions, at least those from the north. Where is popular music without the guitar, and songwriting without lyrical forms brought to New Spain from the Old.

Of course, it won’t happen. Americana is a name to help sell products, not to inform.

Music makers, however, don’t respect frontiers, or any other type of border, and never have done. That’s what fuels them, makes them grow and become great. Cross-border and cross-cultural traffic has always been essential. Musicians were always magpies, taking whatever glitters, never mind the source, circumstances, or foreign words.

Names can provide a guide for music but are best used with some care. Easy tags readily become deadweights round an artist or band’s neck in terms of listener expectations. How many people still think of Joni Mitchell as a folkie? The truth is more complex and much more interesting.

We can’t freeze names or their associations—they change like us. Folk has become slippery to the point of near irrelevance as a shorthand for what’s presented at the majority of U.S. or Canadian ‘folk’ festivals. It relates more to the ambience, and ways of presenting the music.

One last hacky sack in the air, coupled with a request—would someone please come up with a better folkling yoking than ‘singer/songwriter’? It’s one form that’s sounded clumsy and vague for some time. James Keelaghan recently told the editor of this illustrious mag that for him the word is now obsolete. To just call them music writers misses the voices.

Names for musical styles and genres may encapsulate or obscure, open up or close off. They deserve to be used with care by those presenting or representing the music—artists, agents, media—without wrapping them in boxes with the colours of national flags.

May the midwinter holidays be a time for connecting some dots on the musical map, explore new connections, and hyphenating without fear of social embarrassment.



# BLACKIE AND THE RODEO KINGS

**SOUTH • COMING JAN 14TH, 2014 ON FILE UNDER: MUSIC**

## BLACKIE AND THE RODEO KINGS **SOUTH**

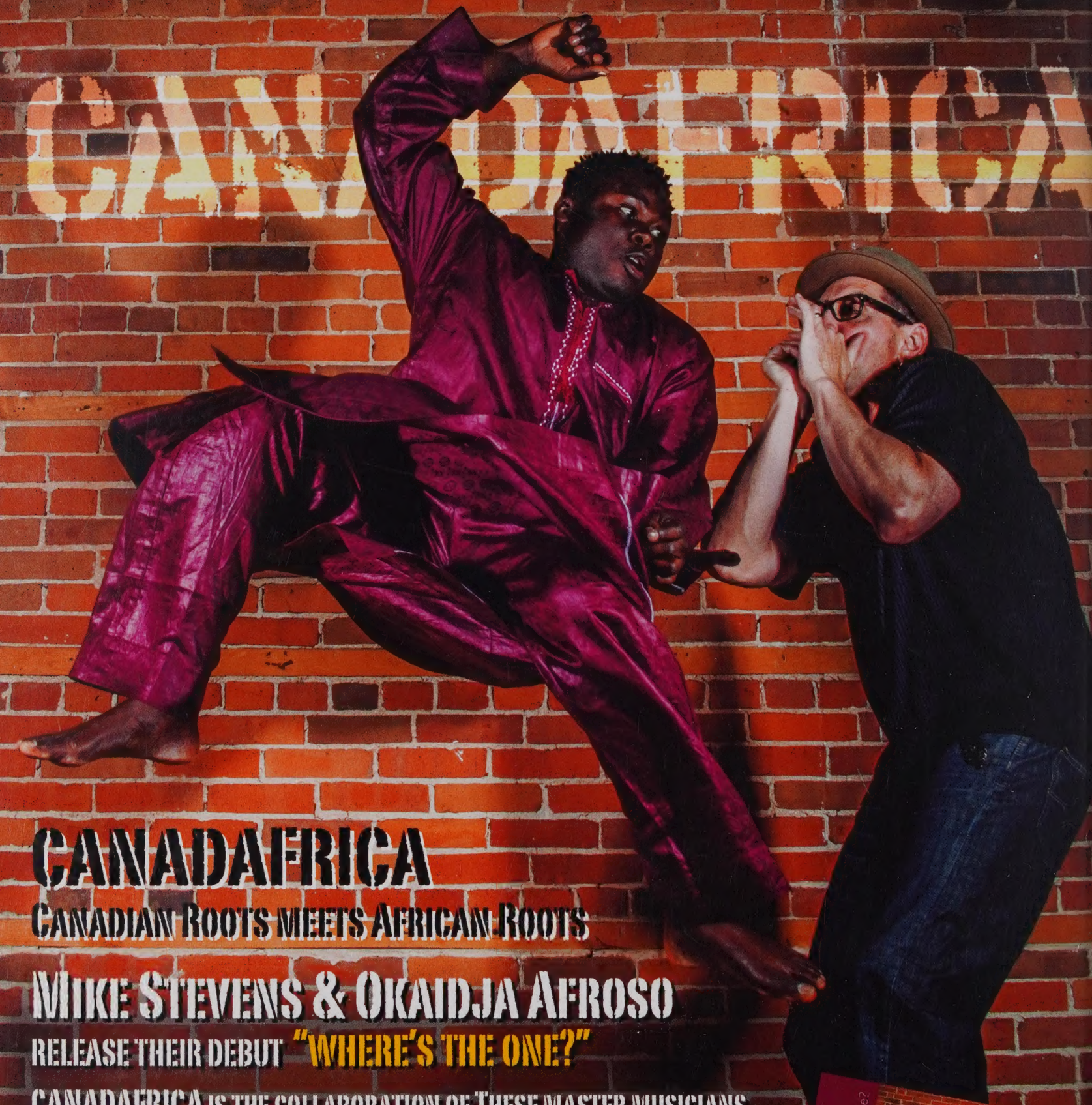


### ON TOUR IN 2014

Jan 24	Guelph, ON	River Run Center
Jan 25	Kingston, ON	The Grand Theatre
Jan 26	London, ON	Aeolian Hall
Jan 29	Burlington, ON	Burlington Performing Arts Center
Jan 31	Mississauga, ON	Mississauga Living Arts Center
Feb 1	Thunder Bay, ON	Finlandia Hall
Feb 2	Fort Frances, ON	Townsend Theatre
Feb 3	Sioux Lookout, ON	Elizabeth District Highschool
Feb 4	Dryden, ON	Dryden Performing Arts Center
Feb 5	Red Lake, ON	Red Lake Highschool







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